



Fox Limited Edition Program

Fox has been shaping the face of motocross performance apparel for over 30 years. Our rich heritage, coupled with design innovation, has paved the way for our Limited Edition line of products. With this in mind, Fox will produce a number of LE Products in limited quantities, & once they're gone. . . they're gone. Own a piece of history-in-the-making: Fox Limited Edition.

Throughout his career, Ricky Carmichael has raced his way into history as the winningest rider in AMA history. Celebrating RC's amazing career, we commemorate his final AMA Supercross season with the RC Limited Edition Blitz Vertigo Gear & the RC Limited Edition F3 Boot. RC first wore his now signature orange color during the 2001 Supercross season, winning a record 13 straight Main events to secure his first of many 250 Supercross Championships.

afridinustral



CONTENTS

FIGHT CLUB!

030

V FOR VICTORY?

054

098

BLE?

Features

030 Fight Club! Travis storms Irish X-Fighters

New team, new motivation, new sparkle for James Noble

054 V for Victory?

It's been a hard road but Aprilia's MX project is finally getting there

We take a tour around Yamaha's lwata factory where dreams become reality

Johnny Aubert from zero to hero

098 Ready to

Josh Coppins, Antonio Cairoli and Carl Nunn on pre-race prep

Women's World Cup winner Katherine Prumm

Reports

112 Brit MX Billy and Swanny on top at Langrish...

114 MXGP

...and Billy's on top at Sugo n'all!

116 WTC
Toni Bou makes it four from four as the world trials circus pitches camp in France

Juha Salminen's unbeaten run continues as the WEC hits halfway

July



Regulars



O06 News
Sport rocked by the death of Dutch tuning legend Jan De Groot plus a month in the life of Swordy and Gordy

ride away with a RM250 RC replica

019 Blarney

021 Jonty's Box Why spectator safety is essential to the WEC

023 Rant Write in and win Etnies shoes and Muc-Off

026 Stuff Blinding bling for bikes, brains and bodies...

051 wwwin!NASS tickets up for grabs this month

064 Burnicle's Beat Happy half-century Kees van der Ven

068 Walker's World Your essential guide to 60-minute

084 Stateside Vegas SX plus AMA Nats wrap

104 Magazine The Dawg falls foul of the KXF's stock grips

110 Mind Games Why rollocking your rider is not the way to get the best outta them

130 Mac211

Billy's big in Japan – thanks to a diet of chocolate and Irn Bru



125 Rage

Irish ace Natalie Kane, Damon Wales' super-trick 150F and Happy Snappers





do, some of us don't, some of us mumble meaningless platitudes like 'you make your own'. In the past I've definitely been in the right place at the right time on a number of occasions landing the job at DBR for example or once dating a lovely young lady whose mum owned a sweet shop - and, equally, I've been in the wrong place at the wrong time as well - er, Junior Kickstart springs to mind for that one. But is that luck or just life?

Take, for instance, the furiously fluctuating fortunes of Gordon Crockard. Gordy's been through the mill for the last handful of seasons and if anyone could be forgiven for thinking Lady Luck and the fickle finger of fate have joined forces to huck him in his hairy boys it's GC. And despite a recent upturn in his fortunes including solid scores in the Italian and German GPs he's still being forced to take the rough with the smooth. I mean, it's bad enough snapping a chain on the penultimate lap of a British champs moto but how many times do you hear of a transponder coming adrift and jamming the steering which is what happened to him in Japan?

It's kinda like motocross as a metaphor for life - you have good days, you have bad days and sometimes you have no control over whether you end the day sunny side up or face down in the dirt.

One man who is definitely riding a wee bit of a rollercoaster at the moment is Billy MacKenzie. After his joint worst GP performance of the year in Germany, Billiam jumped on a jet to Japan and wiped the floor with the best MX1 riders in the world. Now I'm not for one second suggesting it was down to luck (although he did go a tremendous titter while leading the second moto and not only managed to get up uninjured with a still functioning bike, he hung on for second n'all) and if you speak to Billy he'll tell you it was down to chocolate and Irn Bru. Now you could argue that Billy was, in an arse-about-face kinda way, lucky that his German result was poor enough to warrant a blood test that showed his sugar levels were too low. So is that luck? Or is it just life?

The bottom line is that all you can really do is prepare as best you can and then hang on and hope - and that definitely applies to life as much as it does to motocross.



Dutch tuning wizard dies after short illness

THE MOTOCROSS world was stunned by the news that Jan De Groot, the gentle Dutch giant who has guided Kawasaki GP fortunes for the last 13 years, had died after a short stay in hospital.

Jan (61) had a long and illustrious career in off-road motorcycling stretching back more than 40 years. In 1965 he was Dutch enduro champion in the fledgling 50cc class so popular at the time in Holland as an introduction to the sport and he followed that up with more national titles in the 125 class before turning his full attentions

In the '80s Jan was the technical brain behind the Venko Hondas which brought GP success to Dave Strijbos and Gert Jan Van Doorn to name just two but the highlight of his association with red came in his own team as he guided Greg Albertyn to consecutive world titles in 1993/94. breaking the factory monopoly.

It was in the wake of this that Alec Wright signed the cigar-smoking Dutchman to lead the technical staff at Kawasaki and the following year he was promoted to team manager, guiding Stefan Everts to his first 250 world crown.

Everts moved on but De Groot, always with a

keen eye for talent, already had his successor signed up and in 1996 Sebastien Tortelli became the sport's youngest ever 125 champion, following up two years later by ending Everts' reign in the 250 class in a High Noon shoot-out in Greece. After more several near-misses in the following years Jan's final world title success came with Mickael Maschio in 2002.

Never happier than when he could work with youngsters - both riders and mechanics - all of whom were inspired by his laconic wit and relaxed manner, Jan has fostered half the GP paddock in their time and he was again in high spirits this year with two of the fastest youngsters on the track in Tanel Leok and Billy MacKenzie.

Sad to say Jan missed the team's final GP victory of his lifetime in Japan last month but it was typical of the emotions he aroused from his staff that Billy found time to send special greetings to his boss in hospital back in Holland.

Our thoughts and sympathy at this time go out to his wife Ellen and their children. There will never be another Jan De Groot. He will be sorely missed by all who ever knew him.

Alex Hodgkinson

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HIGHLAND FLING!

James Dabill comes out on top in the Scottish classic

LEEDS LAD James Dabill drops a measly 21 marks on his way to winning the world famous Scottish Six Day Trial. The neckerchief wearing Future TRW team Montesa rider battles Highland weather as well as the pressure of leading the prestigious event all week long to take the win by a massive 14 marks over runner-up Michael Brown who beats Graham Jarvis on a most cleans tie-breaker

"This is without doubt the biggest win of my life and one that I have dreamed about ever since I was a youth rider," grins James. "What makes the victory even more special is that I managed to lead it from the start. The final day was always going to be tough with it being my early day but despite that I can honestly say I have really enjoyed every moment of the trial.

Matterley Basin all set to host the Hampshire MXC's Leukaemia Busters event

WHILE MANY thought that British GP and MXdN venue Matterley Basin was lost forever after massive amounts of bad press following the September spectacle, independent motocross club Hampshire MXC have pulled off an amazing coup by securing the awesome venue for their annual Leukaemia Busters charity event.

The event – which perennially raises a whole bunch of cash for the charity – runs this year on July 29 and will use the full circuit that was last ridden in anger by Bubba, Stefan and the boys. While entries for the money-raising event are already full of Hampshire Club members there will be the chance to bid for one entry on eBay - the internet auction site - in the next few weeks.

For more information on Hampshire MXC and the Leukaemia Busters event as well as details about the eBay auction log on to www.hampshire-motocross-club.co.uk.

CHARITABLE CHUMS

Join forces with Dirtbike-Traxs to get three chaps to Chile!

THE FIM'S dumbass decision to hold back-toback 'overseas' ISDEs has really cut down the number of club teams that are able to find the funds to make the trip to Chile for the 2007 edition.

In fact, just two three-man teams from the UK an Army team and the West of England MC are willing to cough up the dough to take on what's meant to be the #1 enduro event on the global calendar

In an attempt to help ease the passage of the West of England club riders Justin Wilson, Julian Crimp and Gavin Houson one of Britain's premier hare scramble promoters - John Kirwin of Dirtbike-Traxs - is organising a pair of fund-raising races. If you're interested in riding either the July 8 event at Skipton or an event on a date yet still to be confirmed - all in the name of charity - give JK a call on 07914 777534.



There are bar-to-bar battles aplenty in mid-Wales proving it's actually Wednesday night that's all right for fighting

NIFTY NORTH-EASTERNER Brad Anderson rules the roost at round one of the PAR Homes/Baches Bargains Welsh Open motocross championships held at Rhayader. Brad wins all three motos to take the Expert class overall on his Pioneer Yamaha ahead of Glen Phillips, Wayne Smith, Ashley Greedy and Jamie Lewis before winning the big bucks Dash for the Cash grand final.

The final round of the mid-week, mid-Wales motocross mash-up is due to take place at Cwmythig Hill on July 4 at the normal start time of 6:45pm. And as well as an action-packed 11-race programme fans will be able to enjoy children's minibike rides, a bouncy castle and a fantastic fireworks filled finale. For more details log on to the official website - www.rdmcc.co.uk.

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On the cover: It's been a pretty good month for Japanese GP winner William MacKenzie (Jonty Edmunds) Contents: KXF crush – Sebastien Pourcel and Tanel Leok dish up a Billy butty! (Magnus Andersson)

WIN. WIN. WIN.

RC replica RM250 must be won

HE'S A living legend, the winningest rider in AMA history and even though he's semi-retired Ricky Carmichael is still the fastest man in motocross – and now we've got a RC replica RM250 two-smoker up for grabs.

We've teamed up with Suzuki GB to offer one lucky winner the chance to get their mitts on a brand-new RM250 with RC's Team Makita graphics, One Industries seat cover and gold SM Prorims. We tested it in April and according to Tony Marshall the RC rep "pulls hard from right down low and keeps on ripping through the range" – just the thing for die-hard two-stroke fans.

The competition kicked off in our May issue, continued in the June mag and then signs off this month. All you have to do is send in your answer to each month's Suzuki-related multiple choice question and keep those fingers crossed.

Each entry requires only one correct answer – this way if you miss one of the competition issues you can still enter but, even better, if you get all three mags you'll get three separate shots at winning the RM250!

And, as an added bonus, readers can also hook up to our website at www.dirtbikerider.com where they can follow the competition link to find a fourth question – yep, that's yet another chance to win!

By now you should either have already sent in two entries – and lots of you have – or be waiting for this final question before stuffing all your entries into one envelope and sending them off. Either way's fine by us – all we ask is that entries are submitted on official entry forms (no photocopies or computer scans etc).

Official closing date is July 12 with the first correct answer drawn at random after this date winning the bike.





QUESTION #3

Which Suzuki rider finished second in the '06 MXI GP series?

A) Kevin Strijbos C) Kornel Nemeth B) Steve Ramon D) Danny Theybers

Answer

Name

Address

Daytime Tel

E-mail

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Cut out this coupon and send it to us at 'Win a Suzuki', DBR, 12 Victoria Street, Morecambe, Lancs LA4 4AG.

Closing date for entries is July 12.

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WONDER'S TO RA PREPARING TO BLAZE THE COMEBACK TRAIL...

WORDS BY STEPHEN SWORD PHOTO BY RAYARCHER.COM

FINALLY I feel like a motocross rider again after all my time off! Yep, I'm back in the saddle and everything is coming good. It's such a great feeling to be riding again - I've missed it so much and I'm walking around with a real spring in my step. Each week I see improvements in my riding and the first few times my ankle would swell up and be a little sore but now it's getting much stronger.

My mechanic Serge came over last week and

we went practising for three days. He brought a few parts over for me to test just so I can get a feel and start to get a good set-up for racing and I'm testing again next week in Belgium so that will be Yep! Everything is coming along nicely!

I've mainly been riding on private tracks but Serge and I popped up to Essex MX. The track was good and rough which is exactly what I need at the moment. I also hooked up with Huck and TC down at Tonymoto one day – it was cool to ride with them again. Justin Barclay from Winterbourne Gunner lets me practice at his track and I really enjoy riding there - it has a lot of jumps which is good for timing and a cool SX track too. Justin plays the guitar really well and is teaching me to play but it's bloody hard going – he makes it look easy, I just make a racket! When's my next lesson mate?

I saw Rich-T last week at Marshfield practice track - he was up there doing some work while I was riding. I haven't got much to rip into him about this month and in fact I actually owe him as he hooked me up with a hard pack tyre as I had the wrong rubber and was struggling with the front end washing out. Marshfield is one of those places where the ground is so hard that without the right compound tyres it's not a lot of fun. No, let me rephrase that, it can be difficult - but always fun!

At home I've been putting in some hard labour in the garden. The foundations are in for the wall but I had to mix some concrete to fill them in - I want to get all this done before I start to race. I may have to phone up Gordon Crockard and see if I can hire his two donkeys - Briggs and Stratten to come and cut my lawn. Do you deliver as well GC? I do feel as though I'm getting older doing all this gardening work but I do enjoy it and it keeps me busy. And it's also too much money to get someone in to do the work - that'll be the Scottish coming out in me again!

Last weekend I popped down to Langrish to watch the British. It's only 30 minutes away from my house so Jodie and I took a slow drive down on Sunday morning. I was gutted not to be riding as it was where I had hoped to return to racing. The track's very fast and I always enjoy racing there but I had to be satisfied with watching on the day. The weather was fantastic so being a spectator I rubbed on some sunblock, relaxed and watched the racing. I headed to the Molson truck where TC, Gareth and Ray Rowson had already started signing autographs so I sat down to join them as Hot Tub had my seat all ready with posters laid out for me to sign. On the Saturday night someone stole a chair with my name on the back from the awning - Hot Tub was not a happy camper - so if anyone reading this has the chair in question bring it back and I'll swap it for a

It was great to see all the fans so thanks to everyone who was asking how things were going and when I would be back racing. Well the plan is to start racing at the end of the month - whether it's going to be a small race or a British championship round is yet to be decided. But one thing's for sure it's going to be a great feeling lining up on the start again. I've been practising a lot of starts and feel good but you never know how things are until you've got 29 other guys next to you when the gate drops

Well, that takes care of everything for this month and I look forward to writing some exciting stuff next time! Good luck at the races or whatever it may be that you do!





Ando and Rawson claim MMX honours

Words and photos by Toby Fuller

WHILE THE racing goes more or less to form, the big surprise at round four of the MMX series at Frome is that the event actually takes place! But far from washing the event out, torrential rain all through the previous day and into the next morning leaves the track near perfect for racing.

In the thumpers division it's Brad Anderson who shows his dominance from the off in qualifying and then runs away with both races easily. However, with two DNFs so far this season Anderson still has some catching up to do.

Championship leader Mark Hucklebridge has an off day in Somerset and it's Wayne Smith on the PAR Honda who takes advantage by nailing a third and a second - good enough to lift him to the top of the table. But he's going to have to fight hard to fend off the on-form defending champ Anderson to have any chance of scooping his first British title.

The U21 class is threatening to turn into a one-man show this season with Molson Kawasaki's Ray Rowson looking the class act. The opening race of the day is a terrific battle with Ashley Greedy, Jamie Law, Kristian Whatley and Rowson all scrapping for places before Rowson eventually fights his way to the front. And it's Rowson who takes the lead early in race two before clearing off to leave Law as runner up again, this time chased home by Greedy.

15

5	Beries sta	nding
F	our-Stroke	
1	Wayne Smith	200 points
2	Brad Anderson	180
3	Mark Hucklebridge	165
4	Jody Smyth	146
5	Danny Smyth	132
U	21	
1	Ray Rowson	237 points
2	Jamie Law	213
3	Kristian Whatley	154
4	Ashley Greedy	135
5	Alan Keet	112

CARRY ON CLEO!

Mercer and Saunders take early AMCA lead

Words and photo by Mike Wood

AFTER PICKING up the 2006 MX1 AMCA title, Phil Mercer switched classes for 2007 to chase MX2 championship glory instead. And Factory Phil gets off to a flyer, taking the overall win at the opening round held at Cleobury Mortimer ahead of debutant Owen Delaney and current MX2 king Brad O'Leary. Over in the MX1 class the podium sees an ACU reunion as former double U21 champ Ben Saunders marks his debut with overall victory ahead of David Campbell and Aaron Poolman.

On a day of mixed fortunes for the top MX2 pilots, Mercer takes the opening two moto wins before Mark Hooley blasts his KTM to victory in the final clash after suffering a badly cut arm in a crash earlier in the day. Current champ O'Leary also has problems after being brought down early in moto two and has to work hard to recover back to 16th at the flag.

While the top boys don't bag their expected points haul at Cleobury, 17-year-old Aran Agius has a dream debut and earns fourth overall with a 4-10-5 scorecard.

With Open class favourites Elliot Barrs, Richard Mike-Jones and Paul Burn all missing due to injury, Saunders, Poolman and Campbell take a win apiece in the MX1 contest. Although the former ACU boys fill the first podium of the season they are made to work hard for their glory by Charlie Hollis, Simon Lane, David Wright (son of famous CCM rider Bob) and young Clinton Barrs. Having made a strong start to the season, Barrs' hopes of a podium finish are dashed by a moto two engine seizure.

Series standings

125cc									
1	Phil Mercer	(Delkevic Kawasaki)	63 points						
2	Owen Delaney	(T+W Racing Yamaha)	50						
3	Brad O'Leary	(Foto-X/AMS KTM)	47						
4	Aran Agius	(Kawasaki)	45						
5	Mark Hooley	(Servo Racing KTM)	43						
Open									

 Open

 1
 Ben Saunders (Race Con Honda)
 69 points

 2
 David Campbell (450cc Honda)
 63

 3
 Aaron Poolman (G+S/Midwest Honda)
 56

 4
 Charlie Hollis (Invek Foods Honda)
 48

 5
 Simon Lane (Honda Equipe)
 46





GORDY COMES OVER ALL WACKO JACKO IN JAPAN AND PAYS THE PRICE WITH PEELED PALMS...OUCH!

WORDS BY GORDON CROCKARD PHOTO BY SUTTY

HI EVERYONE! This month I'm writing to you from a former nudist camp that's thankfully now just a finature' camp! It's just down the road from the Ken Hall track at Langrish where I raced yesterday and, yes, it really did use to be a rudey nudey camp! The campsite guide I use didn't mention anything about it but luckily [for the other campers, think Y2K Lazer ad – SL] it's all normal now so no worries!

My next race is at the weekend in France so I'll head over there mid-week to be in plenty of time for Friday morning set up. I had planned on practising down in the south of England this week but yesterday I tore my hands to pieces so I need to give them time to heal up good. The blisters are a result of my trip to Japan when in the first race the timing transponder on the front forks spun sideways and jammed my steering, resulting in a crash. My glove came off and I rode the rest of the race like Michael Jackson (one glove – geddit?). My hand blistered then and riding Langrish yesterday has made it twice as bad so cycling and training will be on the cards but no MX practice.

For the past five years I've avoided gluten, dairy and wheat as I'm mildly allergic to these and I suffer with eczema on my hand if I eat them regularly. At home I can manage okay getting substitutes for bread, pasta, cereal and all the other foods I should avoid but when I went to Japan for the GP I found it hard to get the right food so eating a lot of wheat probably meant my hand blistered up more easily.

At the start of May I returned to GP action after missing Portugal due to my knee problems. The Italian GP was pretty good and I was pleased with my results. I went back home between Italy and Germany but was unable to attend the SX on the Wednesday evening they hold up at the North West 200 road race. I normally can do it but with my knee being troublesome of late I didn't want to give it any unnecessary stress.

I flew out to Germany and the wind was crazy when we landed. Saturday's programme of practice and qualifying was adjusted because the wind was so bad but I had a good day on the Sunday, finishing seventh and fifth. This got me all excited and I decided to spend a lot of money to get myself, bike and mechanic Phil out to Japan for the next round. I enjoyed the country as a place to visit – the people are extremely helpful and all seem pretty happy. I had some problems in the races after qualifying my best of the year in 12th. First race I crashed while in 13th when the transponder came loose and the second race I clipped the gate and got away very, very last. I made it up to 16th but I was pretty disappointed with my results after doing so well at the previous two rounds.

Before heading out to Japan I was proud to attend my friend Eugene's wedding – it was a real good day's craic and I was really pleased to have been able to make it. I couldn't, however, make the Red Bull X-Fighters at Slane Castle because of Japan but I was lucky enough to catch it on TV when I got back. A few of the freestyle riders stayed in Ireland for a few days after the event and

I was asked to help with some venues for riding and filming some TV footage for an American programme. When I got back from Japan I was trashed with jetlag so I declined to meet up with Travis and co to go riding – I was knackered and had to get ready for leaving to go to Langrish. I couldn't make the Wednesday evening fun at Rhayader either due to logistics – on that topic I'd like to wish Andrew James the best of luck and hope all goes well this time and in the future.

One of my long-time best mates got married on Thursday and I acted as usher on the day. Highlight for me was in the church when we were asked to pray and the bride (Julie) and groom (Ricky) were asked to kneel at the alter for the prayer. Ricky had written 'HELP' on the soles of his shoes and the entire congregation could see this – tears of laughter were running down my face! And Julie looked to be praying a short while later as they left the church as man and wife in a helicopter to go to the hotel – I think it was a surprise for her going by the look on her face.

Amy and I drove the camper over the next day and enjoyed great weather and a new (but old) venue for the fourth round of the British championship. Langrish is used annually for the Ken Hall International and the club prepared the track well and added a lot to the circuit for the event. I was third in qualifying and almost holeshot the first race but turning on a watered first corner is never easy and I was lucky not to crash. I had third in the bag with one lap to go but my chain broke so I pushed my bike over the line for 17th. Second race I made sure I got the holeshot but I couldn't stop on the still wet first turn and slid into the barriers. I still finished the race fifth but I was in agony from the blisters on my hands. I started the day four points behind the championship leader and ended the day 36 points behind but we're only halfway so there's time to recover.

It's never over until it's over...























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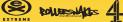
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X-MEN

TRAVIS AND THE BOYS STORM SLANE CASTLE AND LEAVE OUR MAN IN THE EMERALD ISLE OVERCOME WITH EXCITEMENT

AWESOME DOESN'T even come close to describing Red Bull X-Fighters at Slane Castle. At the grand old age of 200 I'm really not that easily impressed and I thought I was acting pretty cool until I realised I was screaming like a teenage girl at a Take That gig!

Travis and the boys simply blew gravity apart and all the riders performed exceptionally well, throwing out routines that left the 25,000-plus crowd gasping for more of the same. What I will always remember from that night was the way Travis attacked the track, racing from ramp to ramp and clicking off two or three tricks per jump. Even when he was on the ground he was pulling wheelies front and back!

And how cool was this? Travis and crew even got to ride

Desertmartin on the Tuesday after the show at Slane. The word is that Travis said it was one of the best tracks he'd ever ridden – sure, what would he know anyway?

British championship news now. With the series at the halfway point things are not looking as strong as they could for Gordon who is fifth in the standings, 36 points off Billy Mac who's in pretty hot form after winning the Japanese GP. But only nine points separate second to fifth so GC could still play leapfrog up the table – especially with the next round coming at Desertmartin on June 23.

The Cookstown spectacular will arguably be the most important race of 2007 for GC and if he's to win British title number four he needs to capitalize on the overwhelming support that he'll receive from his adoring Irish fans.

Gordon always races to win and for my money he'll be the man to beat. Yes, Big Ken rides well there and Billy Mac rates the Desert as one of his favourite tracks but Desertmartin always brings out the best in all the Irish riders.

In the star-studded MX2 class Martin Barr is a pretty lonely seventh at the moment but expect to see him turn in his best British champs performance to date at Desertmartin. Martin is capable of a top five finish and, to be honest, if he gets away at the start he may just surprise everyone. On the local front Tommy Merton, Wayne Garrett and Mike

Sinton – who all scored points last year – will have another run out, as will Stuart Edmonds who has taken points at two of the UK rounds.

Domestic news next and the Tommy and Wayne Show continues to make the main headlines at Ulster and Irish championship events. Two rounds into the Irish National series and Wayne Garrett's Moto-One/Intouch KTM heads the leaderboard from Tommy Merton with young Gary Gibson causing a stir among the established contenders by filling out the top three.

In the MX2 class the young guns are in control of the premier positions with 15-year-old Graeme Irwin the discovery of the season so far. Second place man Luke Wilde has the speed to win races if he can get fit and keep upright – Luke will win an Irish championship moto before the summer's gone. With a DNF at Cork City, Wayne is third in the series having won all three motos he's finished.

In the Ulster Premier division a coming together at Downpatrick will mark a change of tactics as the second half of the season unfolds. Wayne leads Tommy by a small margin – both are very capable and determined to win this championship. Bridesmaid four times last season.

Wayne is yet to secure a title while Tommy is a multi-time Ulster champ. Slow-starting GOMX/Russell's Motorcycles racer Mike Sinton is third in the title chase and will be there to pick up points as the race for the championship heats up.

The determination of AJ Elite Bathroom-supported rider Dave Gorman must not go unnoticed! The only two-stroke rider in the country to mix it at the front, Glenhead Engineering have done a magnificent job with Dave's machine enabling him to run top two at Seaforde before over-enthusiasm ended his challenge. All in all Dave is riding well and can't be ruled out on hard pack tracks – perhaps he is ready for another 450, what you say Jimbo?



Congratulations to James McFerran on winning a moto at the first ever ACU Mini Bike Championship round. In treacherous conditions the Castlewellan-based Monstermoto.co.uk racer won the first race of the series but a DNF in the second moto leaves him eighth after the first round.

As many of you will know, a cruel accident during a MCCNI event at Donamana has resulted in a very popular rider facing a difficult challenge. Chris Elser sustained a serious spinal injury and, in typical motocross fashion, everybody wants to help in whatever way they can. Over the next few months you will all get a chance to take part in a few events with the bottom line being to help Chris and his family concentrate on his rehabilitation.

I've not had the pleasure of meeting him but from what I hear Chris is one determined young man and has surpassed the expectations of doctors so far. Not undermining the seriousness of the situation, we hope and pray for the strength you and your family need at this time.

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CROWD CONTROL!

IT'S NOT JUST RIDERS THAT NEED PROTECTING - SPECTATOR SAFETY LEVELS ALSO NEED TO BE CONSTANTLY IMPROVED

THERE'S A buzz surrounding rider safety at the moment and rightly so. With the global reach of the internet now so great the moment a rider is badly injured – no matter what country or continent he or she comes from – the rest of the world seems to know about it almost as soon as it's happened. And due to the speed at which news travels nowadays it seems like more riders than ever before are getting hurt.

Truth is it only seems like more riders are getting hurt. Whereas, say, a French or Finnish rider getting injured would only be newsworthy in France or Finland 10 years ago (unless of course it was an international star) today you're as likely to come across news of an accident in some far flung place while surfing the interweb as you are unearthing news concerning your local club.

The neck brace, which has been thrust under the spotlight following serious injuries to several of the world's top supercross and rally stars recently, has done much to make riders think about the precautions they take in order to reduce serious injury. But what about the safety of the general public? Surely their safety should be reviewed as well as that of the competitor.

World Enduro Championship promoter Alain Blanchard is big on two things – increasing the WEC's TV viewing figures and raising the number of spectators that come to watch WEC events. Commercially, no matter what the sport, the more bums on seats the more money an event generates which results in bigger profits for those involved. That's the way the world works and I for one can't see a lot wrong with it. Apart from when the sport in question is the WEC.

While I'm all for beaming WEC TV shows into as many homes as is humanly possible, by trying to attract vastly increased numbers of spectators to events the sport is in real danger of shooting itself in both feet. The problem as I see it is this people that come to watch an enduro don't sit on seats. By that I mean that the average enduro spectator doesn't drive to an event, park their car in the spacious safe, clearly signposted car park and then lead their family to their designated seating area where, from a safe distance, they are close enough to experience the excitement of the sport but far enough away not to get hurt.

In reality your average enduro spectator parks on the side of the road, heads off in the general direction of where he thinks the bikes are and is free to watch from pretty much anywhere he likes along the side of the special test. Chances are he'll have his young son with him too. Anyone can pretty much turn up at an enduro event and can certainly stroll up to a WEC special test and view to their heart's content. And with events getting ever closer to towns and cities more casual observers are doing just that, which is where I think the problem lies.

In each country in Europe there are a set number of genuine enduro fans which might fluctuate slightly year on year but generally stays the same. These true enduro enthusiasts know how the sport works and love nothing more than walking for hours in forests while watching bikes. Most casual spectators, the members of the general public Alain Blanchard seemingly hopes to attract in ever increasing numbers, know little – often nothing – about the sport. Yet they are granted the same

free access to the event and can stand where they chose.

Now imagine this. On arrival at the spectacular motocross test a 'new generation' enduro spectator quickly sets his sights on what from a distance looks to be the place to watch – a spectacular section of the track where riders fly high above the heads of the spectators on numerous occasions. Not wanting to miss any of the action he hurriedly picks up his six-year-old son and starts crossing the special test in order to get to where he wants to watch. With the test repeatedly passing from one side of the field to the other our spectator continues towards the action. Stopping for a moment to catch his breath he stands less than a metre away from the test on the outside of one of the fastest corners of the test, his son in his arms.



Now imagine that one of the competitors in the event loses control of his bike, hits the spectator and injures him or his son.

Thankfully, to my knowledge at least, no WEC spectator has ever been seriously injured. And I hope it stays that way. But it could happen. And if it does happen it will be a dark, dark day for international enduro competition. Which is why the powers-that-be need to think long and hard about encouraging members of the general public to come and watch WEC races. We all know that motorsport is dangerous but allowing those with no real understanding of enduro sport, or for that matter cross-country racing, to stand just inches away from motorcycles moving at upwards of 50mph is, when you stop and think about it, crazy.

Spectators are killed annually in four-wheeled off-road sporting events due to getting too close. I just hope that in the rush to get more spectators stood in fields watching WEC events a little thought is given to exactly how they are cared for and what the ramifications are for the sport if they're not.



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Write to Rant, get your letter published and you'll win a one-litre trigger bottle of marvellous bike cleaning fluid Muc-Off. And if we rate your letter highly enough you'll also receive our monthly star prize – this month a pair of badass white/blue Etnies Kingpin shoes!





ROBIN THE BRAVE!

Duch! Ouch! My arms and legs are way to fall off. Let me explain. For my 35th birthday my girlfriend Kaye got me a motocross day from Fun in the Mud - a motocross school based near Kinross in Scotland and run by Andy Russell and his crew.

I read DBR every month, watch MXGP on the telly and I'm in the process of doing my bike test at the moment but I haven't been on a dirt bike since I was about 13 when my dad bought me a CR80 to batter about in fields.

So after a day of slipping around corners and falling off riding up 1:1 slopes – it rained for three day before my visit, that's my excuse was well and truly cream crackered. Great!

Andy is a great teacher - ask Shaun Simpson - and very patient so long as you don't stamp down on the gear levers. His school caters for everyone from beginners to experts and wee kids to big kids like me

A big thank you to Andy and all the lads for an awesome day and for helping me feel like the next Stefan Everts - I'm the same age anyway. Also thanks to my girlfriend Kaye for the best birthday ever (we're getting married next year so if anyone wants to buy me a dirt bike for a wedding present that would be nice). You can check Andy's school at www.funinthemud.co.uk – who knows I might

see you there

Robin, Perthshire

Sounds like you had a great day out young Robin! Oh and good luck with the wedding.

SEAL BLOWER

My name is Ryan, I'm 16 and I live in England. I've just seriously got into motocross and bought a YZ125 only to find one week later that the fork seals had gone! I took it to the shop where I bought it from and they said it would be £60 to repair and as I don't have any other way of fixing it I had to agree. This means I can't get my ACU licence and start racing for another month as I'm skint! Love the mag!

Ryan, via email

Hey Ryan rest assured that the wait to start racing will be worth it. Good luck and let us know how you get on at your first few races.

X-WRITER!

Firstly can I say how good your magazine is and secondly I would like to say how amazing the Red Bull X-Fighters was at Slane Castle. was a bit annoyed that the rain stopped them from doing the finals but I was already quite satisfied by what I had seen. I was pleased that my hero Travis Pastrana won but didn't think it was fair putting Pastrana against Renner in the quarterfinals

Leo, Staffordshire

Hey Leo, Slane Castle was awesome huh? Anyway, the reason Renner came up against Pastrana so soon was that he sucked ass in the prelims that were run in similar lighting to his ride off against Travis in the quarterfinal. For some reason Renner struggled with the poorly positioned lights way more than anyone else and because of this didn't really get chance to show his best skills on the night. Maybe he'll bring his A game to Moscow? We'll see you there..

GIRL POWER

Hi my name is Sian and I'm a 14-year-old girl that loves MX. All my family have bikes and I got my first bike when I was seven and I've always had one since. I am the only girl around with a motorbike but I don't really care, I just go out on my bike and have fun.

Recently when I go and get DBR all my friends say that MX is a male thing and don't understand how I can be so into it. So, I want to know what you think - is MX a male thing that girls shouldn't get involved with?

Sian, via email

Of course motocross in not purely a male thing, you've only got to look at the increasing number of female racers and race fans that attend events right around the country. We reckon the more people that get involved with the sport - be it boys or girls - the better and welcome anyone with open arms (especially girls)!

WHERE TO BUY?

I'm looking to buy a secondhand CRF or maybe a KXF250, probably a 2005 or '06 model as that's all I can afford on my current salary. Do you know the best place to buy one in the Grimsby area?

Chris, via email

T+MX News is your best bet for finding the secondhand bike of your dreams. It's out each and every Friday and can be found at all good newsagents and some bad ones too.

WHICH GOGGLES?

I've just recently purchased a 661 helmet and have been wearing my Smith goggles with it. I think they're called the Warpstar - they have what looks like extended eyebrows! Anyway, they are rubbing against the extended nosepiece on the helmet which doesn't feel right

Upon buying this months DBR I noticed that Tom Church also wears 661 helmets and Smith goggles which have plenty of space between the nosepiece in the helmet and the goggles. Can you please tell me what Smith goggles Tom wears?

Dale, via email

Hi Dale you'll be pleased to know that the Smith Fuel or sometimes Piston goggles that TC wears will fit a lot better inside your 661 skidder than your current Warpstars. There are a number of Smith dealers who advertise their wares in DBR so check 'em out and treat yourself!

MICE GUY EDDIE!

I was wondering if you could publish this picture of Travis Pastrana and me. I met him last week and I must say he's a really nice guy.

Eddie, Northern Ireland

Yes. Yes he is..



RED RIDER

My name is Joe and I love riding motocross and I especially like riding my Honda CR85 when I'm not reading DBR of course. When I grow up I want to be a Honda sponsored rider and do all the big championship races like my hero James Noble. Do you think you can get me James' autograph because I think he's the best rider in the world.

Joe, Yorkshire

Well seeing as you asked so nicely how can we refuse. We'll send it in t'post with your Muc-Off!



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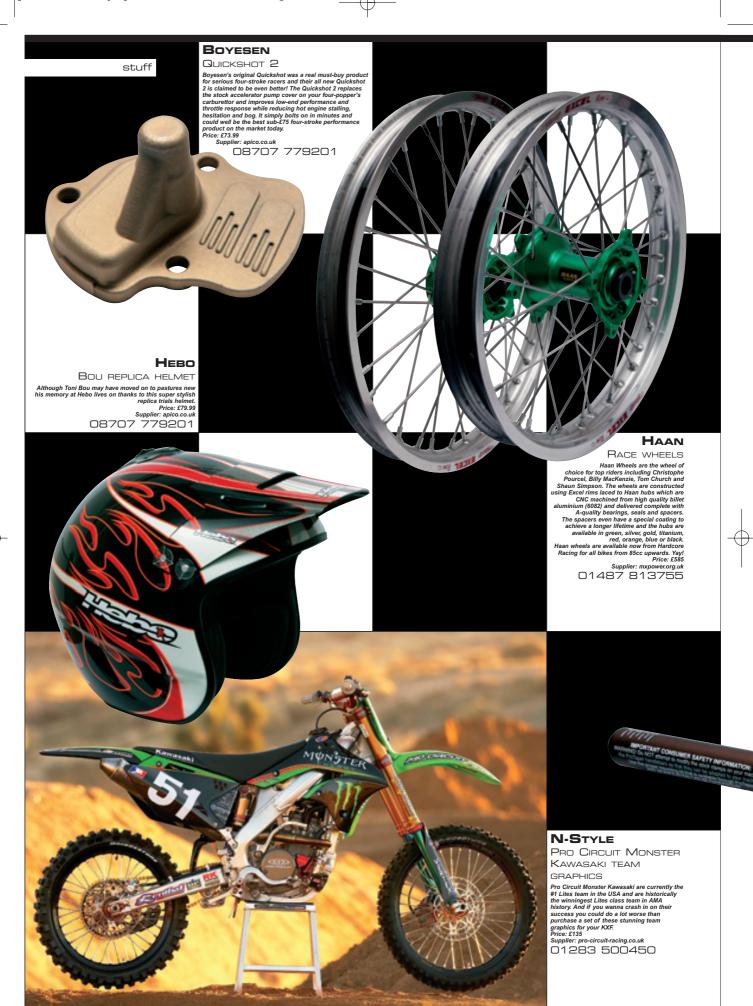




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FIGHT CLUB!

Rain stops play but not before Travis kicks ass as the world's most exclusive FMX outfit - that's the Red Bull X-Fighters - stop off in Dublin

Words and photos by Sutty

A WISE man once wrote 'freestyle motocross riders are nothing more than tattooed jump monkeys in shorts and vests'.* And if you looked back 10 years or so ago at the baggy pant wearing, Jack n' Coke drinking, dirt bike riding jackasses who made freestyle cool in the first place you'd probably be forced to agree. But that was a long time before freestyle motocross became the freestyle motocross that has become freestyle motocross.

From low-budget beginnings in the hills, dunes and desert plains of America, freestyle motocross has transformed from backyard sport to big business in a relatively short amount of time. Late in the summer of '98 American cable TV company ESPN picked up on the hype surrounding the newly formed IFMA Triple Crown series and one year later broadcast the relatively new sport of Moto X Freestyle to over 100 million homes as part of their X Games coverage.



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From there things snowballed. The freestyle motocross competitions at the X, Winter-X and Gravity Games all took America and the rest of the world by storm and as the sport continued to grow in size so did the financial stakes and the danger aspect for the riders.

There was a time when throwing out relatively easy and harmless tricks such as a big whip, heel-clicker, Nac Nac and a Superman seat grab were enough to send you home with the win, the chick, a bottle of sparkling wine and a cheque for 10Gs. Now, unless you know you can do all those tricks and more upside-down then you may as well stay home. And if an athlete is not 100 per cent committed or only thinks he can pull off those tricks then the potential consequences don't bear thinking about.

Freestyle motocross is now at a place where there's way more on the line than simply winning or losing. One small mistake by any of its top-line athletes could mean that the most extreme move they'll have to pull in the future is dodging dog dirt and doleys as they steer their electric wheelchair to the benefits office. Freestyle has become seriously serious stuff and in the process has bred some seriously serious athletes.

This year the Red Bull X-Fighters brings the most serious of seriously talented freestyle motocross riders together for a four-stop international tour of events in Mexico City, Dublin, Moscow and Madrid. The line-up for the Slane Castle stop of the tour is full of them - 10 athletes with an average age of 25, every one of them willing to put it all on the line for a big piece

of X-Fighters glory.

To get an invite to the X-Fighters is a huge accomplishment in itself and there is no short cut or easy way to get one. Every one of the riders present in Dublin is a badass and each has paid their dues to get where they are today with knackered knees, shady shoulders and concurrent concussions. It seems that having the talent and aptitude to go far in freestyle comes with a hefty price.

Take Travis Pastrana for instance. Behind his festive funboy facade lies a super serious







competitor who'll spend week upon week in the foam pit perfecting a new trick before taking it to the dirt. But despite only being 23 years old Travis is old-school enough to remember the times before foam pits. "The foam pits are good because you can try stuff in virtual safety whereas before you knew that learning a new trick could be a very

painful process – you just had to huck yourself and see what happens.
"It's opened up so many possibilities but at the same time has also shown us exactly how much we're gonna crash on that trick. But if you can do it just once you can convince yourself you've got that trick.

At Slane there are no welcoming foam pits to land in, only hard dirt landings - and one harder-than-dirt steel and wood mobile landing meaning you have to stick the trick for real or you get stuck in an ambulance. The course is actually something very special. A huge and carefully constructed dirt play-park that features eight ramp-to-dirt hits, a huge dirt-to-dirt step-up, one massive quarter pipe and then the mobile landing that's situated high on the hill slap bang in front of the 222-year-old castle on the gravel drive.

While the exciting course offers endless ways in which a rider can potentially make their 90-second runs work, Red Bull throw a spanner in the works by dictating that riders must include at least one jump over the mobile landing in their run. It's a cool jump and all but making a freestyler do something purely because of corporate interests blatantly stinks and is the exact opposite of what freestyle motocross is meant to be about.

The X-Fighters events actually do appear to be more of a Red Bull marketing exercise than the spectacular sporting event they're perceived to be - think a highly expensive advert that's broadcast worldwide to over 60 million members of Red Bull's target audience,

all in the name of sport. Admittedly cunning stuff – rant over!

The format for the contest is simple enough with filmed prelims run the evening creating six seeded riders - Travis



the quarters. And that's when things start to

With Wolter and Del Farro knocked out in

round one it's Sato, Izzo, Pages and Renner -

heat up..



can stop Pastrana from tearing it up Travis style

- that's Travis the FMX legend and not the

jockrock band who probably aren't capable of

dirtbikerider 35

weather in Moscow for round three!

For more pics from Slane Castle hook up to the gallery at www.dirtbikerider.com

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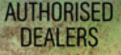


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SHINING BRIGHT!

Not so long ago James Noble was one of the bright young things of British MX until a poor 2006 season took the shine off his potential – but now a new deal with Multitek Honda has seen him start to sparkle again...

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson







WHEN NOMINATIONS go in for the most improved GP rider of the year, James Noble has to be at the top of the list thanks to his sensational form since joining Trevor Avery's Multitek team last winter.

The Whitby Warrior, a seasoned campaigner on the world stage since 2001, has been a regular big bike points scorer from day one but it has taken him six years to move his career significantly forward from that initial impact.

From virtual unknown to best Brit in qualifying at the ill-fated Foxhill farewell in Y2K, James didn't even rank a start with Dorna when the triple-headers kicked off in 2001. But his resolve to earn a GP start with a string of podiums and even a win in that year's Euro series paid dividends and since his initial string of GP scoring rides James has been an indelible part of the world scene.

The following season saw the breakthrough into the top 10 but then the numbers game stagnated. "I think I did progress in 2003 but that was the year when the 250 and 500 classes effectively combined into one group and there were so many good lads in there twice as many as before - so my ranking stayed

Then, after consolidation despite injury hiccups in the following years, doubts were expressed in 2006 if James could make the next step after a truly lacklustre campaign. So what has turned it all around?

"It's hard to put a finger on it, sort of last year it went wrong at RWJ and I lost a complete year. This year new team, new motivation and

'06 was so bad I was determined to put things right and move up a step this year. There's just me on the team at Multitek, everything revolves around me. And everything is so particular, nothing left to chance.

"Steve [mechanic Payne] will watch me riding and tell me if I am not as fast as someone else at certain parts of the track. And when Trevor comes to a race and sees somewhere where I'm slower and he thinks it could be down to the bike, he'll go home and work on putting it right.

"Things like making the bike different for the starts. My starts have never been good so they made different maps on the ignition just for the start. It was a matter of identifying the problems and trying to solve them. I can get one map on the ignition for the starts and then flick it over to the racing map using a switch on the bars. We used that for the concrete start at Canada Heights, though now I've got more confidence on my starts we've gone back to a single map for both

"It depends on the conditions of the start, the conditions of the track and the option is available to me whenever I want it. And I haven't been out of the top 10 off the start all year. That sort of thing just wasn't happening at RWJ, especially last year. Everyone was getting depressed, everyone just seeing the season out in the end.

And the newly encountered enthusiasm at Multitek has inspired more advances. "Steve's sound. He can do everything - suspension, the engine, everything. He knows the bike inside

out. And he helps me a lot. I didn't know enough about the suspension or the engine but Steve is explaining to me what he is doing and I am learning. And he has a good temperament, quite mellow, just gets on with his job, gets it done and gets it done well.

"Trevor too is not afraid to tell me where he thinks I am slow but he will not leave it at that, he will suggest a solution. But the big thing is that Trevor is an enthusiast, he just loves motocross and that is why he does what he does, for the love of the sport."

Such enthusiasm is contagious and James can identify the impact on his own input. "I've always struggled in the early laps of a race so I've changed my training now to just 15-minute sprints. I still ride 45 at a time but I ride 15 flat-out, do another start and another 15-minute sprint and then, bang, another one. I'm still doing my moto lengths but I'm doing more starts and keeping it on.'

A smooth style, too smooth said many, has also possibly stood in James' way. "I've been working on my style and aggression during the winter but on a 450 you have to find a happy medium. Too aggressive and you'll end up on the floor in a heap!

"I still ride smooth and tidy and I'm still struggling in qualification when the track is too easy and it's just a matter of hanging it out. But I believe in myself more now – my confidence is starting to build, particularly after running so well in Portugal and Italy. People can tell you you have the talent to do this and that but in the end it's having that belief in yourself.









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"Motocross is a lot about confidence and at the back end of last year at RWJ I was just riding round. Everyone knew RWJ was going tits up and the whole thing was just drilling me into the ground. It already started in '05 and I should have got out then but Colin [Reed] convinced me that it was going to be all right. But the finance just wasn't there.

"By the time it got to August and September it was just hard work and I was just going through the motions. I would have loved to race for Britain at Matterley but I could accept the decision to drop me. I didn't deserve to be picked the way I was riding."

picked the way I was riding."
With his will to race — let alone win —
hanging by a thread, salvation lay with Trevor
Avery and his Multitek outfit. "My brother John
got talking to Trevor first and looking around the
paddock at teams which could be available to
me we felt Trevor was the best way for me to
go. And my results this year have proved we
were right.

"And add to that the belief which my personal sponsors had in me. Martin and Karen Oldham of White Rose Leisure Park, Mathew Robinson of Road Planing Services and Reg of RJS Builders have all stuck by me. I now have the confidence that I can take it further – more confidence in the bike, more confidence in myself. I go out practising now and try to focus on my weak points, pushing and pushing.

"I think everyone has upped their game this year with Stefan gone. There are so many good riders in MX1 and everyone is pushing that much harder, it's a really competitive class. But I'm getting the starts and I'm getting used to running nearer the front so I'm riding loose from the start and being able to push for the first four or five laps whereas before I was struggling in the pack. Before I was riding at a speed I could keep up all day but now I'm pushing at a speed I can maintain flat-out for 45 minutes."

Already established well inside the top 10 and right up there among the factory boys, James is showing no complacency. "Everything is possible with the set-up I have now at Multitek. Trevor and Steve do a cracking bike — as good as anything out there — and if I do my job too everything is possible!"



Why did you sign James, Trev? "Because he's the best English rider, simple as that. I think the possibilities are endless, his fitness level is exceptional, he's just a terrific replacement for Paul [Cooper] and if he works on his techniques I don't think there are any boundaries to where he can go. He's addressed his starts, he's working on his style, he's working real good with the bike and he's a bloody nice bloke.

"I think the stagnation which there has been in his career the last couple of years was because of what was happening around him and that is starting to change now. It's not going to happen instantly but it is changing. His attitude is fantastic – you're not going to get anyone with a better attitude, end of story. He fits into the team

perfectly and it's the happiest the team has been for years. I'm comfortable with that."

What do you get out of the team? "A hole in my pocket – a whopping great hole –
but I'm looking forward to some good results which will make it all worthwhile. At the
end of the day we are supporting somebody British to compete at the highest level of
the sport with the best equipment we can put him on and that makes me proud."





Team Multitek, clockwise from bottom left, Johnny Nichols, Steve Payne, James, Trevor Avery, Ray Game and David Winchester

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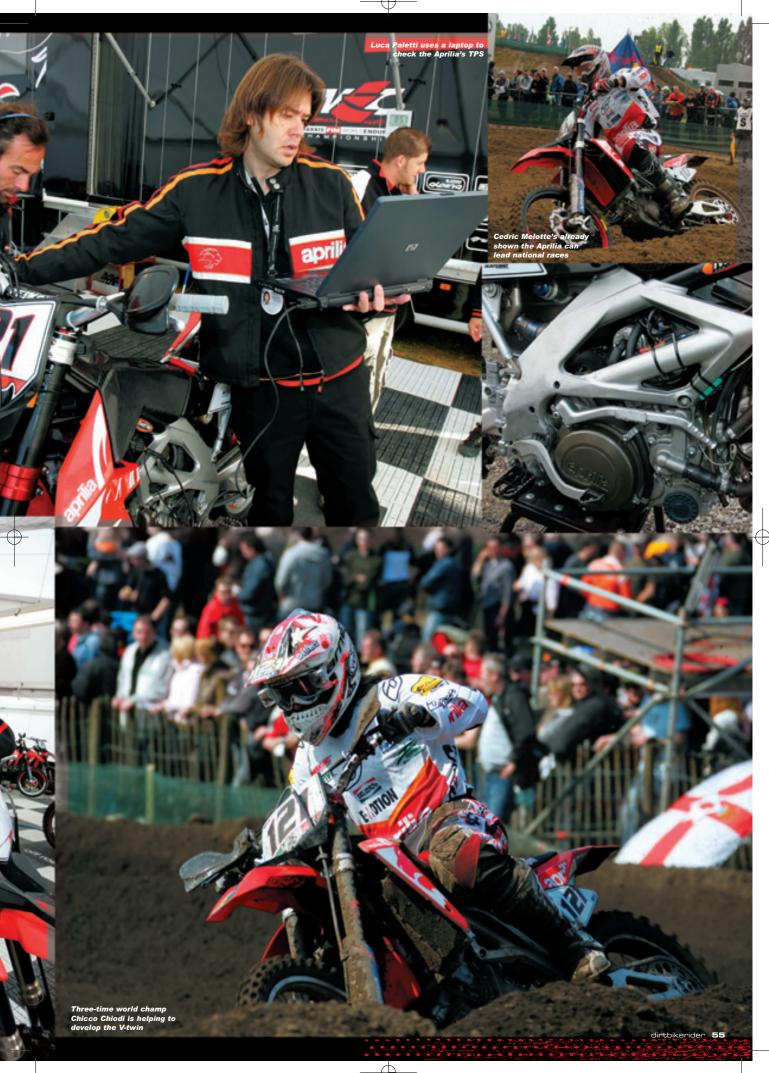


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from our new riders Chicco Chiodi and Cedric Melotte. We have a different crankshaft and camshaft, the gear ratios have been changed, also the geometry of the frame. You know, Cedric crashed and hurt his knee when he was in front of the Italian championship race and he had been there for four laps and was moving away."

Luca Paletti, another ex-Husky man on the

Aprilia payroll, is the engineer responsible for the day-to-day development of the motocrossers at the GPs and took us through the new features.

"As you see on the right side of the bike, we now have a kickstart. The e-starter was just too heavy and we don't need it. The twin does not

run as hot as a single and starts first or second kick even when it has been racing for 40 minutes. Each cylinder is also half of the size so it is more like turning over a 250. And this has saved us 5kg. Now glance behind the steering head. On the previous bike we had an external oil tank but we now have an internal solution like Yamaha.'

We know the twin is quieter than a big single but where's the pipe? "We are now using the lateral exit silencer from the supermoto bike!"

Most of these features should now only need fine-tuning and the biggest debate in the lead up to pre-production revolves around the search for optimal traction.

"We changed the angle of the forks during

the winter, making it steeper and bringing the front wheel back. Both Chicco and Cedric say this improved handling and now we are looking for the best solution for the rear wheel. Chicco now prefers a longer swinging arm again for traction but that meant him using a 50-tooth rear sprocket, we are now making a new swinging arm so that he can use a 51.

Just how critical the rear end geometry is to handling and traction comes home when you note the adjustable rear sub-frame on Chiodi's bike. "Chicco is not so tall and prefers a lower seat. We didn't want to change the length of the rear travel because that has such a significant change for the whole bike."

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thing on weekend mornings and you will see Luca with a laptop plugged into the bike. "We check the map and also the throttle position system TPS every day. We have never had problems but we are a factory team and this is the sort of thing you check anyway as a matter of course.

The winter signing of Chicco Chiodi has helped the factory move on in leaps and bounds. The three-time world champ is the most experienced man on the circuit and jumped at the chance to join Aprilia. "They are a factory team - an Italian factory team - and I believe in Aprilia. Some people accused me of only going to Aprilia for the money and it is true that they pay well and are honest but there are many people at Aprilia who are working very hard to succeed and I too want to see results. It is in my blood to achieve good results.
"Of course, I must look to the future. I am

34. I would like to race 10 more years but I must be realistic and I hope to continue with the firm long after I eventually stop racing.

An MX2 man all his career bar two years, it was also a surprise for many to see Chicco on a 450. "I was not scared to change class. I never had a good complete season in MX1 before but I had a few good races and I was really becoming the grandfather in MX2 and I wanted to get out. And I know many of the people from our years together at Husqvarna we worked good together then and I was sure we could do so again.

"One of the last problems we are trying to overcome is in the way the engine reacts on heavy ground like in Valkenswaard. You cannot ride it like a single - the power curve is different and when you close the gas there is no overrun. At first it is difficult to find the balance.

You close the gas in the braking bumps on the other bikes and momentum carries you into the turn but the twin stops and you have to learn to throttle back gradually. When we find the right solution it will actually be a bonus because you are already on the gas where the opposition have shut off.





Cedric Melotte



"I had enjoyed the development work until then and I am happy with the progress we have made. The new bike is a big step forward and when we start racing it in June I think we can make good results. It was no problem for me to change to a twin as I had good experience before with VOR.

"For me it is a good challenge and until the race where I crashed nobody believed the bike could lead a race but I was in front for four laps. And the crash was my mistake.

"The first thing I told them was that they had to reduce the weight but there are developments every day. I have a two-year deal and I can see staying with them after that if they want me but I am not looking at enduro or supermoto. Perhaps the occasional race but not a full championship. I have been racing for a long time already and when I stop MX, then I will stop racing.





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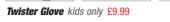








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created and built the Metisse bikes which are still an integral part of historic racing. The Rickman brothers' early bikes were developed from BSA

and Triumph parts. It was generally recognised that the smooth Triumph power was the optimal tool of the day but the BSA had the better frame. Hence the Tribsa hybrids.

But the Rickmans took the concept much further, eventually

manufacturing their own frames and developing their own image with beautiful glass-fibre panels. They were so successful that the long-established Matchless factory put their fuel tank on a Metisse for Chris Horsfield to win the 1964/65 BBC Grandstand TV series.

The Rickmans themselves also toyed with the Matchless single as power provider but they always returned to the Triumph twin in the end.

"And we have strong power. I nearly got the holeshot in Spain but I got filled in at the second turn, my goggles got full of sand and I went straight into a haybale. I had also made a good start at Valkenswaard but I was so far to the outside at the gate that I had no chance at the first turn. And I believe greatly in the new bike. Between now and the end of the year we

will open some people's eyes!"

Another familiar face is the new team manager, Riccardo Boschi, who GP fans will recognise as the man at the side of Luigi Seguy in the JK team over the years. "I was very proud that Aprilia asked me to be their motocross team manager. I guess they knew that I had the good experience to run a team because I have run my own JK race team for seven years and we had good success with Luigi. I am respon-

sible for the structure of the team, rider training and the race infrastructure. This is a great chance for me but a lot more responsibility."

So where do Aprilia go from here? Is the motocross bike a prestige project for the Piaggio group which owns the marque?

Back to Signor Macchi. "We will start

pre-production for the press to test in October and mass production will begin in early 2008. First a small quantity for the customer before we increase production for the 2009 market.

"We believe that that there's a market for motocross, enduro and supermoto - particularly in the US - and that's very important for the Piaggio group. We feel that there will be many customers in America who will be interested because we are different, we believe that our philosophy will appeal to the mentality.'



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THIS YEAR is becoming the season of half-centuries and the latest major figure to celebrate a Golden Anniversary is one of the finest riders never to be crowned a world motocross champion.

Born in Bakel, the Netherlands, on June 18 1957, Kees van der Ven – a deceptively quiet, modest master of motocross – eventually earned world titles as a team manager with KTM in his mid-forties. Both Grant Langston and Ben Townley, now pursuing successful careers in the States, first nailed 125 world championships with van der Ven's Champ KTM squad.

Their mentor, in contrast, never quite clinched a global crown. But the docile Dutchman's amazing consistency saw him finish top five in every world series he contested from 1979 through 1988 and he become the first man to win a GP in 125, 250 and 500cc classes.

He achieved that dazzling accolade at Vimmerby in Sweden in 1986, annihilating the Honda Racing Corporation as he sumptuously won race two by over 40 seconds on his KTM from Andre Malherbe, Dave Thorpe, Hakan Carlqvist and Eric Geboers! The wooded, sandy circuit near Gothenburg obviously suited a native Lowlander. It was there three years earlier he'd arrived locked in a thrilling three-way tussle for 250 world honours with Suzuki's Georges Jobe and the man Kees respected most highly as a rival, Californian Danny 'the Door' LaPorte.

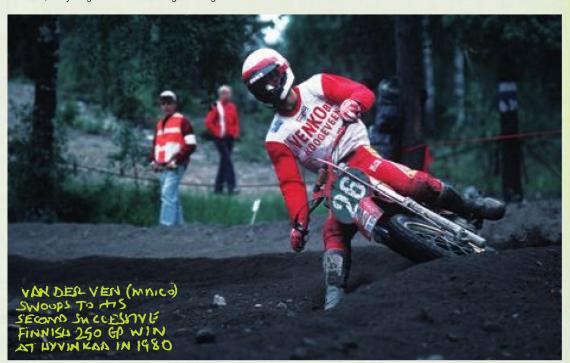
Van der Ven held a two-point mid-season lead in the series after his fabulous dice with LaPorte at Hawkstone Park but at Vimmerby a first race rostrum ahead of Danny's Yamaha but behind Jobe and Donnie Hansen wasn't enough. Third in the world again!

Youngest of a family of six, Kees had to overcome the hostility of elderly parents to get started in motocross. Eventually, aged 12, he got going on the discarded mopeds of elder sibling Toon, who later accompanied his kid brother on the GP trail as minder, mentor and best mate.

At 15, the youngest van der Ven began racing with the

IN 1988 KEES AND HIS MILITARY MOUSTACHE ENJOYED HIS SIXTH LANKSTONG PARK GP PODIUM IN JIX SUCCESSIVE VISITS!





Dutch equivalent of the AMCA on a 50cc Sachs. At 18 he graduated into the KMNV (a Dutch ACU) riding 125cc Aspes, Maicos and an English Wassell with a Sachs motor. Vital early influence came via a local star from the same village, GP rider Frans Sigmans, who got the boy a Husqvarna. The teenager worked at Sigmans' motorcycle shop and practised with him. "Every session became a race," smiles Kees. "We rode as long as we could. You had to show you could ride longer than Frans!"

He won the 1975 250cc Dutch Junior championship on the Husky, then the Senior title a year later on a Maico. And in 1977 he lost the Dutch 250 national crown to Gerard Rond by one point!

He started doing French internationals "to learn hard tracks"

and in 1978 won that Dutch 250 championship. He would retain it for a further six seasons until moving to the 500 class in 1985 and winning that too!

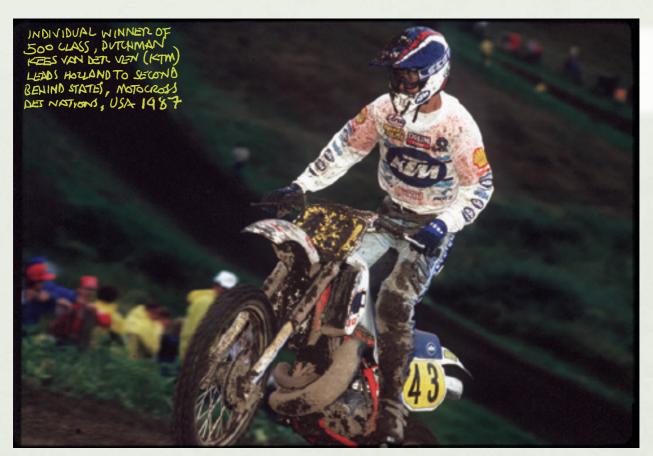
In 1979 Kees startled the established 250 GP stars, finishing fifth in the world and capturing his first grand prix win in the fast, sandy whoops of Hyvinkaa, Finland. He loved that awesome venue and won there again in 1980. Kees also triumphed in Poland and his home round at Hengelo, secured his first moto victory at Hawkstone Park and ended the year vice-champion of the world behind Georges Jobe.

Still working during the week, the moustachioed 23-year-old finally turned professional in 1981 with a richly deserved factory KTM contract. Third for three consecutive 250 GP seasons on the Austrian bike, his successes included the

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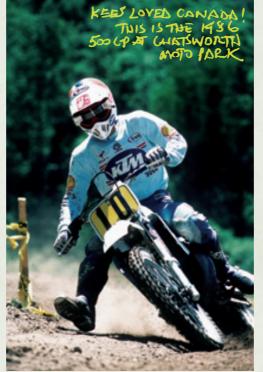
1981 British round at Hawkstone, completing a hat-trick of Finnish victories at Hyvinkaa and a famous US GP win at Unadilla in 1982. Also that year Kees claimed a first hard-pack triumph at Maggiora in Italy and in 1983 did the double at Canada's only ever 250 grand prix in St Gabriel!

With both Jobe and LaPorte moving to 500 GPs, Kees was convinced that 1984 would be his year. But Katoom had other ideas and moved the leanly muscled Dutchman to 125 GPs! "I was in the middle of a two-year contract with them and had no choice," he says with his customary philosophical shrug of the shoulders.

The 125 class disappointed. "They were kids in every way. They slept at nine o'clock and did exactly what you should do!" Not the ideal recipe for fun-loving van der Ven who I once watched hurling tomatoes around a restaurant with a bunch of Dutch mates! Yet he led the 1984 series imperiously, winning seven out of the first ten motos and overalls in Italy, Belgium and Germany until he broke a hand in Switzerland. "I lost a 60-point lead with three flat tyres in a row and missing three heats with that injury." Michele Rinaldi stole Italy's first crown and, ironically, van der Ven's pal Heinz Kinigadner won that 250 title for KTM.

For 1985 he was armed with a new power valve 125 Katoom that never really worked. He reverted to the '84 cylinder head mid-season but it was too late. "I didn't even go to the final round in South America. There was a possibility of third place (for the fifth successive season!) but that didn't matter to me..."

The year ended with a bang. In a barnstorming ride round the blue-groove off-cambers of Gaildorf on a stock KTM, he brilliantly beat Honda's world champ Dave



Thorpe and led Holland to a rousing second behind the USA at the inaugural three-class MX des Nations. He loved the power of the 500 and enjoyed his relationship with the factory. "They were good people. They never said 'you have to be first'. Never put pressure on. They knew you would do your best all the time." Kees carried this thinking into his own management of the Champ KTM team a dozen years down the line.

Fifth in his first campaign behind four giants of 500 GP racing – Thorpe, Malherbe, Geboers

and Jobe – van der Ven won that historic 1986 Swedish Grand Prix at Vimmerby. He then won the last two rounds of 1987 in Luxembourg and Switzerland to fall just six points short of runner-up Kurt Nicoll in the series (third again!). And, always magic in mud, emerged best 500 at Unadilla's rain-lashed MX des to stick Holland on the rostrum in second, again, to the States!

Pushed back to fourth in 1988 behind Geboers, Nicoll and Thorpe, Kees still won a race at home in Lichtenvoorde and in '89 captured his 18th and final grand prix victory back, remarkably, in Sweden.

Seventh in 1990, Kees rounded out his distinguished grand prix career on a private Honda in 1991, still good for fifth at his beloved Hawkstone Park where he'd won once overall, twice lost on a tie-breaker with Danny LaPorte and mounted the rostrum six times in six 250 and 500cc GPs.

Kees' imposing record of 10 250 GP victories and four apiece in 125 and 500 classes puts him 22nd in the all-time winners' list. He always attracted impressive outside sponsors, too, backed at various times by big names like 'Snickers' (originally a Dutch chocolate bar before it superseded Marathon in the UK!), 'Drum' (a roll-up tobacco), 'Dr Pepper' and his longstanding team backer 'Champ', a brand of dog food.

Kees also kept an old school friend – the quiet, smiling Seph – as his mechanic for the whole of his adult racing life and showed similar loyalty to KTM. His distinguished association with the Austrian marque spanned 25 fruitful years until his unexpected dismissal from the helm of their successful MX2 squad late last year.

Kees' smooth, apparently effortless style and sheer class made him, quite simply, one of the coolest MX riders ever!



this then break open the Rich Teas..."





Wakker explains how to give your bike a good going over - and get it done in 60 minutes!

Photos by still-mx.co.uk

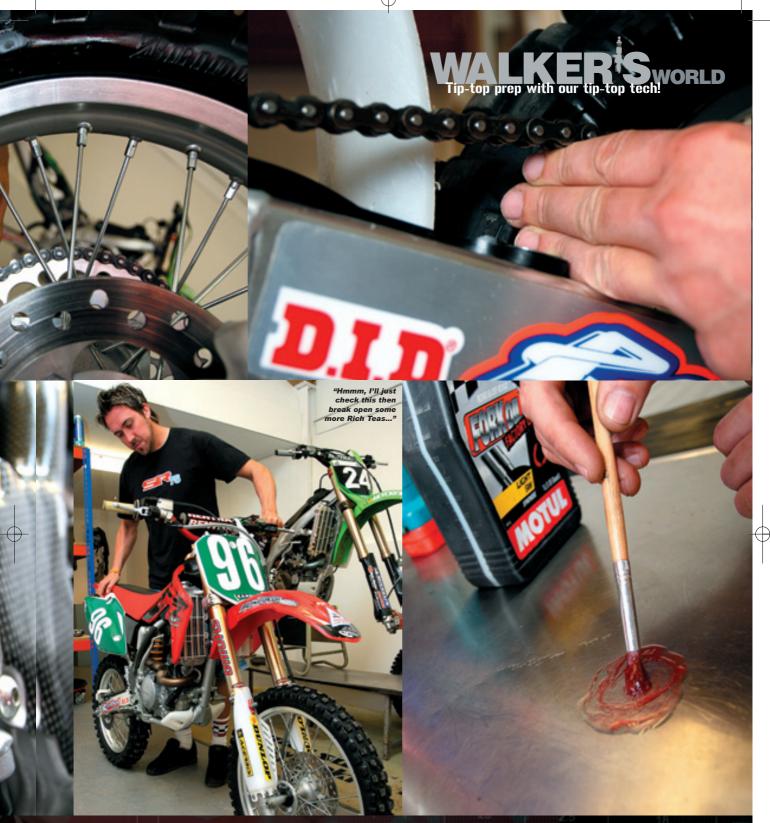
The CRFs have proved to be very reliable if left in stock trim with maybe the addition of a pipe to increase power while meeting noise levels. Regular and simple maintenance will keep this reliability a reality and it doesn't even have to take up a lot of your precious time. The following simple points will keep your bike in tip top condition in under an hour per week.

HONDA'S CRF150 is proving to be a popular weapon in the schoolie ranks and with noise levels from the little barkers seemingly under control it appears that the four-stroke revolution is gonna keep on getting smaller - in capacity

As with any maintenance you must have some quality tools and a basic knowledge of how to use them. Low quality tools make for low

at least.

68 dirtbikerider



quality work as your fixings will all be damaged with ill-fitting equipment so get some good tools! Fro Systems do some cracking little t-bar sets now so that is a good place to start your tool collection.

The first and most obvious port of call is the power washer. Get the puppy clean... Super clean. Use quality detergent such as Motorex Moto clean 900 or Muc-Off. There are loads of bike specific cleaners out there. Pick your favourite and stick with it. Don't use TFR (traffic film remover) as most of these are a little too powerful and will tarnish the metals on your bike. Pay special attention when washing to get every running point on the bike really clean think brakes, sprockets, chain-guides and wheel spindles. A bike which is cleaned well takes

hours less to prepare and will last a lot longer.

If you have a filter cover use it and get the airbox really clean. If you don't, just wrap a plastic bag around the filter and carefully wash the airbox with detergent and a low pressure hose pipe.

When the bike is clean use a soft cloth or paper towel to dry the bike off. If you have access to compressed air then use this to blow off the excess water. Use some spray oil such as WD-40 around the engine and bare metal areas but don't lube up the brake discs.

You can lube the chain with a specific chain lube. The chain should be lubed on the inside running area on each side plate and then in the middle runners before finishing with one lap of lube around the outside of the chain.

Use three fingers at the back of the chain slipper to check the chain tension. If the chain needs adjustment loosen the rear wheel and adjust the chain making sure both sides are set exactly the same on the marks. Use some soft cloth in the sprocket to make sure the wheel is 'home' before you retighten the wheel and lock the lock nuts up tight on the adjusters.

Check the spokes by squeezing them together. There should be a little bit of flex in the spokes but if there are any with too much movement tighten carefully until snug. Do not over tighten the spokes as the wheel will go out of true.

Check the rims for damage and check the tyres for wear. If there are knobbles missing or worn out replace the tyres. The tyre

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pressures should be checked. Use 12psi in perfect conditions and 14psi in rocky conditions. Also check brake discs and pads for wear and check disc and sprocket bolts for tightness.

The CRF should have an oil change every two race meetings. If it doesn't need changing simply check the engine oil level and top up if required. Do not overfill as this will cause a blow out of oil from the breathers and will cause excess pressure build up in the engine. The CRF150 is the same as its big brothers as it uses separate oil for the gearbox/clutch side and engine side.

You can use certain four-stroke oils in both sides but my ideal oil recommendation for this time of year is Motul 5100 technosynthesis 4t oil for the gearbox and Motul 300v racing 4t competition oil for the engine side.

Check the coolant level. It should be about 5mm from completely full. Brake fluid is easily checked on the CRF. It should be clean and topped up. The bike shown has done 43 hours and the fluid is still like new.

Bleed the forks of air (make sure the bike is on a centre stand) and check fork seals for any signs of leakage. Pop the dust seals off and clean the seal area and lightly grease with racing grease mixed with fork oil. This will keep things running smooth and dirt free in the seal area.

Check rear linkage for damage and make sure the shock is moving correctly. If the free sag seems too much or too little you must check it. Set the free sag at around 25-30mm. Simply loosen the locker on the rear shock spring and turn the spring and adjustment nut clockwise to tighten the spring and reduce the free sag or anti-clockwise to loosen the spring and increase the free sag.

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P068-073 - Walker's World-SL 1/6/07 8:59 am Page 73



The air filter should be replaced after a few rides. Oil with a quality filter oil and damp off any excess oil with a cloth before fitting into the bike making sure the rubber boot is free from any internal crud.

Drain the carb float bowl. This takes around one minute and gets rid of any nasties lurking around in the carb body. It always gets in there and the carb must be drained after each wash..

The front to back check of every fixing from the front of the bike to the back of the bike is the key to success. If every fastener is checked then you can be happy that the puppy is going out onto the track and won't self lighten by way of parts falling off!

Armed with a set of t-bars, sockets and spanners you can give the bike its front to back in just a few minutes. This will become habit and makes for a safer ride. Do not over tighten the fixings - if they don't move when you check them don't swing on 'em to make sure. These bikes are lightly built and the Honda quality makes for excellent quality fixings that do stay snugly tight when checked regularly.

So there it is. If the checks are regular the little CRF will keep on trucking. Obviously if there are a lot of things wrong like the tyres and fork seals then the service will take more than an hour. These checks can be made easily between motos and make for a sweeter, safer ride.

Checklist Front to back fastenings

- Front fork guards and triple clamp bolts
- Handlebar mounts
- Throttle housing and throttle action
- · Clutch lever and also check clutch cable freeplay
- Plastics (check every plastic part at this stage)
- Radiators and hosesFuel and fuel cap

- Swingarm pivot and linkage/shock boltsSeat and subframe



Star Wars Tubby bites back!

Just a quick note to those of you who think – after reading Swordy's drivel – that I do nothing but eat Rich Tea Swordy's dimer – that I do nothing but ear North methods biscuits all day long. The truth is that during my visit to the 'House of Haggis' I did not eat any Rich Tea – or any other type of – biscuits as my little Scottish friend was too tight to get the biscuits oot for the boys.

As well as being too tight to break out the biccies he had the cheek to make three cups of tea from the same tea bag and I'm sure I caught the wee haggis retrieving a used bag from the bin to make Sutty's cuppa! So there you have it – the truth is out there. I'm now off to Burgers R Us for the all-vou-can-eat lunchtime special!

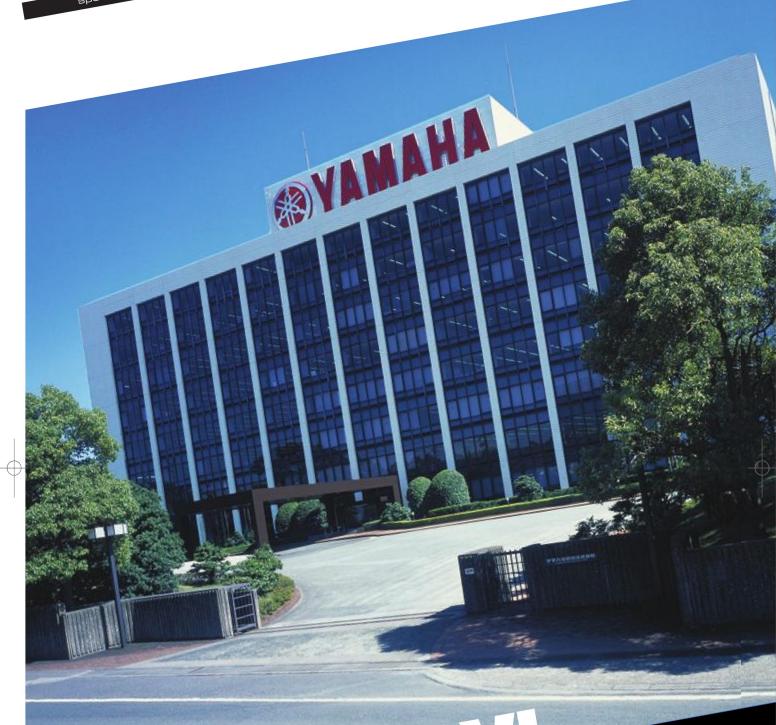


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special feature



When it comes to 'modern' four-strokes Yamaha set the ball rolling a decade ago and have been the most successful marque in world MX decade ago and have been the most successful marque in world MX decade ago and have been the most successful marque in world MX decade ago and have been the most successful marque in world MX ever since so a rare chance to tour their Iwata factory is just too good to turn down—even if it's bardly access all areas ever since so a rare chance to tour men iwata ractor to turn down – even if it's hardly access all areas...

Words by Adam Wheeler Photos by rayarcher.com



must be left at the security point, you have to wear a guest Yamaha cap and you must not leave the green sections of the factory floor at

So begins the tour of the undeniably impressive Yamaha facilities at the sprawling any time!" industrial town of Iwata two hours south east

The Yamaha factory tour is the hot ticket for via bullet train – of Tokyo. a select few GP journos who've made the long a select lew GP journos who ve made the forth trip to Sugo for the Japanese GP. Think Willy Wonka only instead of chocolate rivers and funny little orange dudes you get petrol-head heaven at the birthplace of machines ranging from dirt bikes all the way through to

snowmobiles and scooters.

This is not only a chance to meet and speak with the brains directly responsible for the machines that have the highest win ratios in the short history of both MX1 and MX2 classes, it's also a chance to see how mass-produced bikes begin their lives as chunks of metal on the

olly 1100. Japanese manufacturers are notorious for a sense of secrecy that verges on paranoia. factory floor. sense or sectedy that verges on paranola. Yamaha, with their deserving claim of being the ramana, with their deserving drain of sens most prolific and pioneering firm in modern most promite and pioneering minim modern motocross (certainly in the four-stroke era), are fiercely protective of their principal YZ450 and accompany to the principal YZ450 and process of their principal YZ450 and process 250F projects. So while their hospitality and welcome is overwhelming there is a sense that welcome is overwhelming there is a sense that the locked the surface of the work done behind the locked white screens has barely been scratched.

After a welcome by a gaggle of staff outside the main complex the marshalled walk around the first of two production plants - the general assembly line – begins. The PR people are clear-cut in their guidelines and the green floor areas separating four well-manned and continuously moving lines are spotless (like the rest of the place), only used by a few rare guests and the automated carriers following magnetic strips, transporting kit around the vast magnetic strips, transporting kit around the warehouse. Parts over 15kg are delivered to warenouse. Parts over 19kg are derived to be a learned to each station by automatic transporters to save each station by automatic transporters to save human labour and in typical Japanese style the trolleys whirl out a cheery tune that would put an ice-cream van to shame.

Around 1200 completed motorcycles roll off the four lines each day before being disassembled and packaged. A minimum of 10 units of a particular model are made while others can run into hundreds depending on the demand and estimates of the sales division. mand and estimates of the Sales division. Frames spin overhead before being dropped

onto the beginning of the line (less than a football pitch in length) where a new motorcycle is started every two minutes and takes roughly two hours to be finished and crated. Approaching the end of line four in which an endless train of 250Fs are dangling and slowly enciess train or 200rs are using and significant inching forward, it becomes clear why the are a giveaway and the reluctance for images of the 2008 versions to fly around Europe before the machine has even crossed the time zones is

Yamaha work solidly for six months to fill a full year of shippable units. This means that the understandable. production lines have time to churn out the next generation of machinery before customers even

have time to run-in their new bikes. The 250Fs enter the line as a bare chassis.

On each side a worker has a designated task and the engine is whipped in from a separate and the engine is wripped in norm a separate building across the road. Running parallel to the lines are shelves and containers full of parts nnes are snerves and containers range per and components delivered by the musical and components delivered by the musical moving trays. One guy at the end has probably the best job of starting the engine for the first through the deather on a time and running through the gearbox on a rolling road. Someone asks if a machine has rolling toau. Someone asks if a machine ever arrived at this final point and hasn't started? "Never" comes the puzzled reply from

The engine plant is more regimented with 900 staff on two floors producing a phenomenal 4000 motors – ranging from ATV to snowmobile to motors a ranging from ATV to snowmobile to motors – ranging from ATV to snowmobile to motors and the same to same the guide. to motorcycle engines – each day. There is less automation in this sector and more precision. Guests are not even allowed on the floor and bave to pass on an overhead walkway gazing nave to pass of an overhead walking spains down at a sea of crankcases, moulds and tools. Dense performance charts indicating the

speed and efficiency of a particular line along speed and emplemey or a particular line along with scattered posters of Valentino Rossi adorn the walls revealing how yamaha like to manage the welfare of their workforce and how the workers actually seem to absorb the racing efforts of the company as a source of pride. The production line was what I expected but

I did not think it would be so interesting," says one curious member of the visiting party – MX1 world championship leader Josh Coppins who's wone championship leader Josh coppins making his maiden trip around the facility. making his malden the around the raolity.
"It was so precise, clean and perfect. I have only been around mechanics before working on bikes so I think I expected something similar but it was so Finnik r expected something similar but it was like a hospital. I could have stood there watching

In just 52 years of engineering and innovation Yamaha have established 13 for hours!" factories around the world with 8000 employees and a wide range of products from motorcycles to boat outboards, golf karts, water purifiers and even Olympic standard swimming pools. Yamaha has a product line-up that is very

diverse," explains Yamaha Europe's racing onverse, explains famalia Europe's facility and manager Laurens Klein Koerkamp. "The off-road section is quite significant to them because in section is quite significant to them because it are a significant to the areas like the US and Australia it represents the main motorcycle sales area. In Europe it is less in terms of percentages but still important. The engines are also being used in ATVs so the development cycle is crucial because that market is another priority for Yamaha. As for our racing we feel that we don't need to really shout racing we lest mat we don't need to lest about it – the results do all our talking.

As well as providing exclusive racing kits for MX2 via the Rinaldis, the all-conquering YZ450F has been undefeated in MX1 and the burning question – after aluminium frames and Rinaldi innovation – is where can the production motorcycle go now in order to improve its stock?

motorcycle go now in order to improve its stock?

"I'm confident for the future YZ," says project
leader Taisuke Sakurai. "Our target is better
controllability and a lighter feeling on the bike.

Everyone knows our level now, but we want to Everyone knows our level now but we want to rise above customer expectation, give more power but make it more manageable. The issue with noise is a problem and we have to try a with noise is a problem and we have to if y a quiet grand make a quieter machine – we quiet silencer and make a quieter machine have spent quite a lot of time on this subject." Yamaha claim to be the first company to

mass produce dirt bikes and their YX26 took a first competitive win for the company in 1967. Importantly, they like to acknowledge the role importantly, triey like to acknowledge trie role they have played in installing and then raising the bar in the four-stroke era of motocross as we know it today. Their first version of the YZ we know it today. Their first version of the TZ arrived in 1998 and was adopted and developed ived in 1990 and was adopted and developed former GP racer Michele Rinaldi leading to a by former GP racer who lete Rinaid Head first 500cc world title the following year.

Yamaha's racing efforts within Europe owe a large debt to Rinaldi. The Italian established his own research and development wing that basically transforms the production YZ450F into the works weapon used by Everts, Coppins and co. All of the data and work carried out by the small but highly efficient Italian division of the small burnigmy enicient italian divisit Yamaha feeds back to Japan where the ramana reeus back to Japan where the technicians behind the evolution of the bike can

Now the system seems simple but I progress their ideas. remember in the past – around 2001 or 2002 – the Japanese did not want to call the bike we the Japanese did not want to call the bike we were working on 'YZ' because we had changed it so much," Rinaldi reveals. "At the time they only made a 400cc engine and that was not good enough to compete and win in the 500cc class. Both our team and YME had to force class. Both our team and YME had to force them to change many things, they were not so keen but we managed it. They did not want the label 'YZ' on the bike because they did not want table accepted with competing that might not label accepted with competing that might not label accepted with competing that might not label. to be associated with something that might not work – it was called 'YZ FM' in the end. It was a key moment for us because it did work and we gained a lot of their confidence from that day on."





the same."



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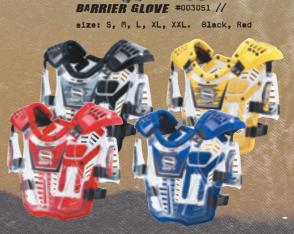
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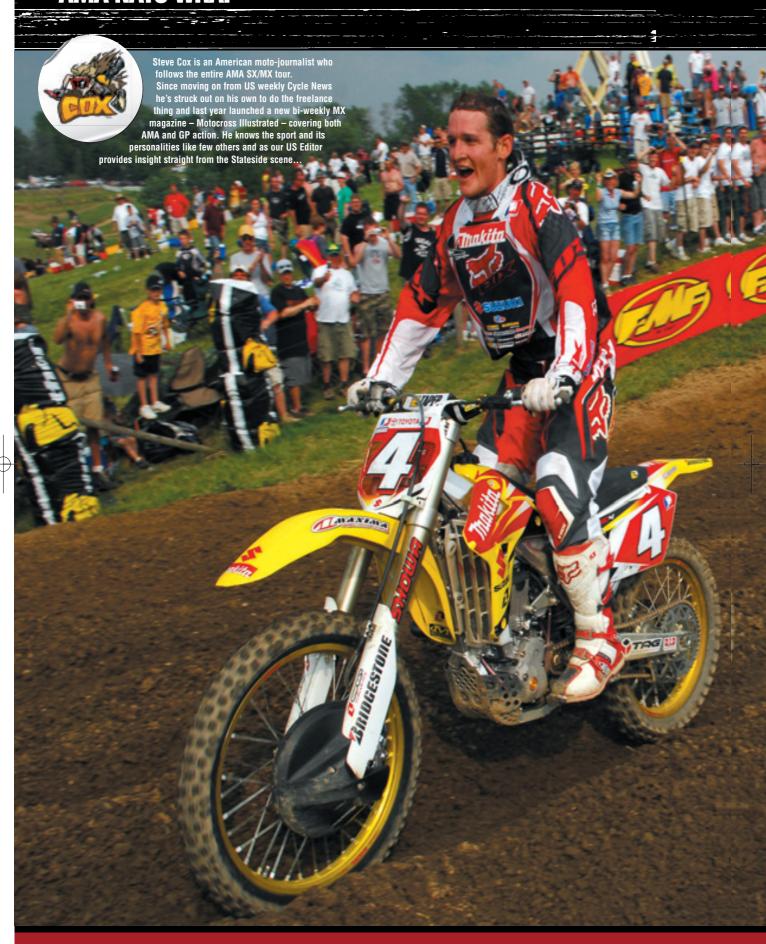
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Despite being semi-retired, Ricky Carmichael is still the fastest man outdoors

SERIES STANDINGS

Motocross

Ricky Carmichael 97 points James Stewart 87 Timmy Ferry 78 Davi Millsaps 76 Grant Langston 61 Andrew Short 59 Kevin Windham 59 Mike Alessi 9 Michael Byrne 10 David Vuillemin 43 18 Adam Chatfield

FINEWNE

Just like a quality bottle of Bordeaux, Ricky Carmichael seems to get better with age...

Ricky Carmichael's plan coming into the Nationals is to race the first five events, then go back into hibernation until the Motocross des Nations at Budds Creek. But as amazing as he is, even he probably doesn't imagine that two races in he'll have three moto wins.

At the series opener at Hangtown it's James Stewart who grabs the opening holeshot but he falls only a couple corners into the race and Carmichael takes over. Stewart begins the chase and then it's Carmichael's turn to eat dirt.

"He was pushing me, dude, there's no doubt about it," Carmichael says. "We're back where we were last year and we had an insurmountable lead on third place. But when you're riding that fast and you don't feel comfortable, stuff like that happens. What's frustrating is when you feel good and you're being held back. All the years I've been coming here since '97 I've never found a bike that felt sweet out here for some reason. I was running out front with maybe a two-and-a-half second lead or something and I fell down and I got back up and started trying to go again."

down and I got back up and started trying to go again."

Carmichael retains the lead but Stewart is a lot closer. He moves past Carmichael on lap 12 and then Carmichael glues himself to Stewart's rear wheel as Stewart keeps

getting stuck behind lappers. But Stewart hangs on to win just in front of Carmichael. Some 71 seconds later Stewart's team-mate Timmy Ferry crosses the line third, just in front of Kevin Windham, Davi Millsaps, Grant Langston, Mike Alessi, Andrew Short, Michael Byrne and Jeff Alessi. Everyone else is a lap down.

Moto two sees Millsaps with the holeshot, although Carmichael moves into the lead

Moto two sees Millsaps with the holeshot, although Carmichael moves into the lead on lap two and is quickly followed by Stewart into second. A few laps into the race Stewart goes down while pressuring Carmichael for the lead and when he gets up Carmichael is gone.

Stewart seems to concede the moto but even so he goes down again in a tricky section before the finish line and bends his bars and knocks his front brake lever out of reach. Without a front brake he's unable to make a charge on Millsaps in second and falls into the clutches of Ferry.

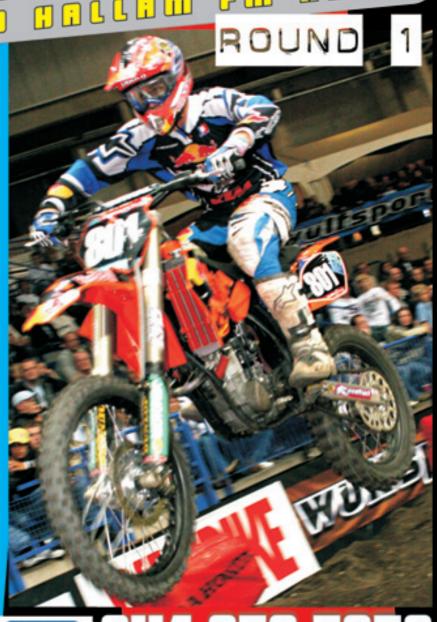
falls into the clutches of Ferry.

Ferry finally makes the pass for third – and it's an aggressive one. "I had to make kind of an aggressive pass to get by on one of the off-cambers," Ferry says. "I came together with him and I didn't want to take him out and make him lose any more points but at that point I was just worried about getting on the podium."

SUPERCROSS







AMA NATS WRAP

dbr stateside

So Carmichael takes the moto and overall win with a 2-1 score while Stewart is second overall with a 1-4, Ferry is third with a 3-3 and Millsaps is fourth with a 5-2.

Mt Morris features much of the same sort of things as moto two at Hangtown as

Mt Morris features much of the same sort of things as moto two at Hangtown as Millsaps grabs the holeshot in moto one, giving way quickly to Stewart. Carmichael finds his way into second but by then he's quite a ways behind Stewart.

Carmichael begins to eat into Stewart's lead until he is on his rival around the halfway point. Carmichael eventually finds his way past and into the lead with an aggressive pass around the outside of Stewart. From here the moto is over as Carmichael hangs on to win over Stewart, Ferry and Millsaps.

to win over Stewart, Ferry and Millsaps.

Millsaps takes his third holeshot in a row in moto two but this time Carmichael is quickly past and into the lead. With Stewart mired in the pack the race is over before it really gets going and Carmichael goes on to win comfortably over Stewart, Millsaps and Ferry.

"This one will be special, for sure," Carmichael says of his win. "Coming off the last week and how I felt – and obviously racing this guy [James Stewart] – I think we feel so good about ourselves and our programme when either he beats me or I beat him. I think when I beat him I feel awesome. When I beat Jeremy it just felt awesome and I'm sure for him it's the same way so that's what makes it special – any time you can beat the toughest competitor you've ever faced it makes it sweet."

Stewart finishes second overall with a 2-2. "I was really struggling in the corners today," Stewart says. "I was really struggling trying to get into them and that's where I really lost all my time. He could do that tunnel jump more cleanly every lap and I could only get it every other lap or so."







EAST V WEST Stewart and Dungey win in Vegas

Las Vegas has been alternately kind and vicious to Monster Energy Kawasaki's James Stewart in the past.

He was one of the long list of non-champions to win the shootout in his rookie season of 2002 after losing the 125cc Western title to Travis Preston. Then, in 2003, after winning the Western title he crashed out spectacularly which kept him out for much of the outdoor season while another 125cc non-champion went on to win the Main – Andrew Short.

He returned in 2004 to win the shootout as the 125cc

SUPERCROSS Final series standings

1	James Stewart	385
2	Chad Reed	334
3	Timmy Ferry	276
4	Kevin Windham	240
5	Ivan Tedesco	197
6	David Vuillemin	196
7	Michael Byrne	189
8	Ricky Carmichael	160
9	Heath Voss	160
10	Paul Carnenter	1/12

Eastern champ then crashed out of the 2005 250cc event in his heat race. He returned again to win the 2006 event on his way to clinching the World Supercross Championship and he's focused this year on not continuing his love/hate relationship with Sam Boyd Stadium. And it works out for Stewart as he takes a pretty easy victory to cap off his season with 13 wins.

The Dave Coombs Sr Lites East/West Shootout has a history of favouring underdogs. Since 2000 either the East or West champ has only won the event once and that was in 2004 when James Stewart won both the Eastern title and the shootout.

This year, though, it seems a foregone conclusion for

many that either Villopoto (the Western champ) or Townley (the Eastern champ) will win as the Pro Circuit team has won 11 of the 15 races run coming into Vegas.

Villopoto wins the Western Regional heat race and Townley wins the Eastern Regional heat race and they seem to be the clear favourites to win the Main Event. However, nobody tells that to Makita Suzuki's Ryan Dungey who grabs an early lead and takes advantage of mechanical failures for both Townley and Villopoto to win the Main Event from Jake Weimer and Martin Davalos.

"It's definitely a big shock thinking about where I was at a year ago," Dungey admits. "I'm just really pumped to be here right now and I work hard and I really want this."

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AMA NATS WRAP

dbr stateside



PC OK! Ben and Ryan set Lites pace

Monster Energy/Pro Circuit Kawasaki's Ben Townley and Ryan Villopoto are highly favoured in the Lites class in the 2007 AMA Nationals. Villopoto is the defending champ while Townley is his seasoned team-mate and former

At Hangtown Townley and Villopoto fight their way through the pack in moto one to pass Makita Suzuki's Ryan Dungey and leader Josh Grant after Villopoto actually crashes out of the lead in the early going.

"The moto was going good until I fell over," Villopoto says. "I washed the front out in the mud and they really watered the track before both motos. It was really muddy, so it was just a mistake that I made and I just had to work my way back up."

Once Townley grabs the lead Villopoto immediately goes by to assume the front spot. "I just got past Ben and it seemed like we both wicked it up and he stayed right there with me until the end of the moto," Villopoto says. "Then the second moto was a different story..."

Townley isn't very enthusiastic about his runner-up finish. "From my perspective, it was crap," Townley says. "I rode terrible. I was second off the start behind Josh and on the off-camber in the back I went down. From every lap on after that on that off-camber I rode like a girl. I came down there and I would lose time to Dungey and once Ryan passed I would lose time to him there.

"I did get the lead but it was only brief. I just rode terrible. I got caught riding like these guys do and not riding my own race. I was frustrated after that race because my times have been consistent all weekend so I went back and thought about it and wanted to ride like I know how to ride in the second race."

The second moto is all Townley as he starts the moto with a big holeshot. Villopoto works his way into second right away with Dungey third and Grant fourth. Villopoto actually passes Townley for the lead at one point but hands it right back when he crashes and remounts second. And that's all Townley needs.

"I fell over again after the step-up and Ben got past me and once I got to where I could see Ben I was in second and I was watching him just inch away," Villopoto says. "I was trying to do something about it but I think he was riding the track a lot better than I was. I was making mistakes and was losing it there and just had some bad line choices.

"To be here and win on the same day as Ricky Carmichael and race with these guys in America is something that I'll look back on in my career and say that it was amazing," admits BT, "I've watched videos and read magazines for years and years and to win a National today is amazing. It's hard to put into words how it feels."

At Mt Morris Dungey grabs the holeshot in moto one with Grant on his tail. Townley goes down on the start and damages his front wheel. After he gets up in last he has to stop and get a new front wheel before resuming his charge from probably 45 seconds behind the next rider on the track.

"I was pissed," Townley says. "I couldn't believe it. I've been getting good starts lately and that Pro Circuit bike's

awesome. I've really changed the way I've started and I've been getting lots of holeshots and I was gutted when I went down there. Then, on the first lap, I was going around and I could hear something hitting the disc and Bones took a closer look at it and he had me pull it in. So I pulled it in and got it on the stand and it felt like an eternity - I was way last by the time I left the pits."

Grant passes Dungey right away and begins to pull away out front. Jason Lawrence moves his way by Dungey into second, only to lose the spot to Villopoto only a lap or two later and the top three is set as Grant takes the moto victory followed by Villopoto, Lawrence and Dungey. Amazingly, Townley finds his way all the way up to 10th.

Moto two sees Grant take the holeshot but Townley is quickly by and speeds away. Villopoto moves into second in the early stages and the top three is decided.

"Between motos I just told myself to go out there and make sure I got maximum points in that one to limit the damage," Townley says but Grant's 1-3 is good enough for his first AMA National win, followed by Villopoto's 2-2 and Townley's 10-1.

"It feels really good," grins Grant. "I'm pumped. I've been working really hard for this and I finally put it together this weekend. I felt really good on Saturday in practice and pretty much all weekend."

Villopoto establishes an eight-point lead over Townley after two rounds but he knows it's not going to be easy from this point on. "It's going to be tough," Villopoto admits. "Josh is riding good and Ben's on it so it's going to be tougher than last year, for sure.'

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ON MAY 7 last year Frenchman Johnny Aubert stunned the enduro world by claiming victory in only his second ever WEC event. With an almost complete lack of international enduro experience, the E2 class rookie turned the series on its head and left many wondering how the then little-known rider had achieved what no other competitor in the history of the WEC had.

Up against on-form, uninjured and seasoned WEC campaigners, Aubert's leap almost straight to the top step of the E2 podium was a major surprise. A rider who as a youngster was once viewed by many as France's next Jean-Michel Bayle, having seen injury repeatedly deny him the results he was capable of achieving as a professional motocross rider Aubert, at the age of 26, seemed to have found his calling.

But for Aubert competing in the WEC was something he'd never considered until the end of '05 when, after countless seasons ruined by injury and struggling to make ends meet, he finally decided he'd had enough of motocross. The 80cc world MX champ back in '93, Aubert's dreams of making it as a professional motocross racer had been dashed.

"I was 17 when I turned professional," recalls Aubert who would eventually bring his motocross career to a close injured, dejected and ready to "get a normal job". "I raced for the Platini Kawasaki team on a 125. My first year in the GPs went quite well, I qualified at every race, made some good results and finished about 32nd or 33rd in the world championship."

But during his first years of the world championship circuit Aubert "made", as he puts it, "lots of big crashes". "Whenever I was starting to ride fast I would get injured and then have to stay at home for some months. I was

"In '99 I was fourth in the 125cc world championship after the first two races. But then I crashed with Grant Langston in Brazil and I badly damaged my knee. I was at home for six months after that. I started again but had more problems and my motivation went down.

Continuing to compete in the world championship up until the end of '03, Johnny decided to try something new in '04 and signed to race in the States. "I raced in the GPs in '03 and then went to the US in '04. I was with a small team in Europe, my bike wasn't so fast so I decided to try something new.'

But things didn't work out for Johnny in the US as a crash at the first round of the AMA Supercross series while competing on a 125cc Suzuki saw him break two vertebrae which resulted in him returning home for close to five months.

"I returned to GPs in '05," recalls Johnny,

"but I had no real motivation and no money. In the middle of the season I stopped. I was racing full-time but not earning any money. I stayed home for five or six months after that not racing and that's when the UFO Corse Yamaha team contacted me.

The rest, as they say, is history and with the UFO Yamaha team looking to recruit a rider from outside of the WEC Aubert headed to Italy.

"The team saw me ride and asked if I wanted to try racing in the WEC. I said yes, signed the contract and for the first time in many years I had some money in my pocket," recalls Johnny. "It was strange for me because I had scored some good results in motocross for 10 years or so but wasn't able to earn any money from it. I didn't have an enduro licence, I couldn't change tyres, had never ridden in an enduro and the team were going to pay me. I thought the team were crazy but I also realised that I had a chance to turn things around.

So for the '06 WEC season the team's championship aspirations fell on the shoulders of Aubert and his Italian team-mate Fabrizio Dini. With absolutely no international enduro experience, few expected Aubert to do more than simply compete and learn during his debut season. But as the '06 season drew closer the last-minute re-signing of Stefan Merriman to compete in the E2 class for UFO Yamaha







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unthinkable. He claimed his first WEC victory.

"It was absolutely fantastic to have had such a great weekend," recalls Aubert thinking back to the first time he stood on top of a world championship podium. "I couldn't believe it at first. On day two I wanted to fight for a position on the podium and I did that. Winning my first world championship race in my first season of enduros was fantastic

Having claimed his first world championship victory after just four days of competition, Aubert instantly became France's new enduro star. Just two races into the '06 WEC season Aubert had shown that he could adapt quickly to unfamiliar conditions and had the speed to win. But surely a world championship title in his first year was too much to ask even of Aubert?

"Many people started asking me if I thought I could win the world championship after my good start but I always knew it would be hard. I showed that I could be fast but I still had a lot

Throughout '06 Aubert remained extremely level-headed about his chances of winning the E2 world championship - even after he backed up his impressive Portuguese result with a winning ride at the third round of the series. But as things turned out Johnny didn't win the E2 world title in '06.

With Samuli Aro going on to defend his title, Aubert ended up fourth - the result of three no-scores. After failing to finish the second day of the GP of Italy, Aubert finished on the podium on both days in Canada and the States, returned to the top step of the podium once more in Slovakia and then crashed out of the final round of the year, his home GP. So what does Aubert think of his

performances during '06? "For the first year I think I did pretty well. I finished with three day wins and finished on the podium at seven races Yeah, it was a good season really.

With one season of WEC competition under his belt and riding for a familiar team and racing familiar machinery, Aubert's goal for '07 is an obvious one - to try and win the E2 world championship.

So his hopes were high as Johnny headed to Sweden following impressive results in the early rounds of the Italian Enduro Championship. But a group of fast Scandinavians prevented Johnny from repeating the double podium finish he scored 12 months earlier and after ending up fifth on both days Aubert left Sweden a little further behind the E2 championship leaders than he had in '06. But he was optimistic of strong results in Spain and Portugal.

"Samuli and Mika were both very fast in Sweden so it was always going to be difficult to win. I pushed to finish as high as I could, my results weren't so bad. I learned last year that you don't need to win every day to win a championship. The important thing is not to score zero points at any race.

Strong results were exactly what Aubert got as the series arrived in southern Europe. Winning both days in Spain before going on to win both days in Portugal, Johnny took the lead of the E2 championship to once again show that Mika Ahola and Samuli Aro weren't the only two riders fast enough to win

Pit bitches were quick to say that the only reason Aubert had won in Spain was because the event essentially had three motocross tests "That's why a good result in Portugal was important to me," explains Aubert. "Yes, the tests were good for me in Spain but I knew that I won because I was the fastest, not simply because the race was easy."

In Portugal Aubert collected another double

E2 class win to not only silence his critics as

the race was anything but easy but also to move to the head of the E2 championship standings

"It really annoys me when people tell me that it is easy for me to be fast in enduros because I am a motocross rider," adds Johnny. "I think I am fast because my style suits enduro, I have some good skills, I am smooth but also quite aggressive. Just because I come from motocross means nothing.

This year Fred Bolley is racing in the WEC. He is a motocross racer, a former world champion and he hasn't won any races like I did in my first year. It doesn't matter if you come from motocross, from trials or from road racing. The only thing that matters is the result.

If you are fast enough you can win."

As leader of the E2 world championship, Aubert arrived at the UFO Yamaha team's home GP hoping to defend - if not extend his class lead. Disappointingly, Johnny headed home from the event that marked the midway point of the series dejected and back in third position in the championship having failed to finish the second day due to a sudden engine problem when in sight of the finish.

Although Aubert now faces an uphill battle to move himself back into a position from where he can again challenge for the title one thing is certain - he won't give up on the championship without a fight.

And if Johnny does or doesn't win the E2 world championship this season another thing that's certain is that the Frenchman's future lies within enduro. "I am completely finished with motocross. I have some good memories of motocross but a lot of bad memories. The last two or three years were really difficult for me in motocross. I am really happy with the UFO Yamaha team, my mechanic and my bike. My home is with enduro now.





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EVER HEARD of the six P rule? No? Well it goes like this - proper preparation prevents p**s poor performance. It's relevant to everyone from club racers to world champions and can be applied to every aspect of racing from pre-season testing to mid-week training to an effective - and often overlooked - race day routine.

Two riders that clearly know how to prepare themselves for the demands of grand prix motocross are Yamaha stars Josh Coppins and Antonio Cairoli. Current leaders of the '07 MX1 and MX2 world championships, the two riders have learned not only how best to prepare for a GP season but have also developed a race day routine that ensures they can perform at their very best.

For both riders race day preparation is a continuation of the way they prepare themselves during the days leading up to a GP. With the amount of sleep, what they eat and drink and the amount of testing, training and relaxation they do mid-week all linked to their weekend and season-long performances, ensuring they perform at their best come Sunday has much to do with their well honed race day preparations.

One thing you won't see either rider doing on Sunday morning at a GP is rushing around in panic mode. Thanks to simple planning both riders like most top-flight athletes - handle their pre-race preparation in a relaxed way, leaving them able to focus on their racing. Ensuring that they are as relaxed as they can be means that even when the pressure's on they can deal with it and still remain clear headed and focused.

As most everyone knows sleep is hugely important to athletes as it gives the body time to rest and recover. But for many GP riders where they sleep - be it in their camper at the track or in the often quieter surroundings of a hotel - is what's of real importance.

"I prefer to sleep in my camper during the weekends," explains Josh. "There's so much to do during the day before the race like walking the track, speaking with the team and sponsors, having a massage and generally getting stuff ready that by the time I've eaten it's normally really late - the last thing I want to do is go and find my hotel. I often don't finish at the track before half past eight. I have everything I need in the motorhome as well. I can eat what I need when I want to and don't have to worry about finding a restaurant."

But while Josh lists the benefits of sleeping in his camper so convincingly he sounds like a Trucks R Us rep, Antonio takes a much more laidback view of where he sleeps. "Sleeping in a hotel or in my camper is

the same for me," says the superstar Sicilian. "I don't really mind where I sleep. If I have my camper I will sleep in it, if I don't I'm happy to sleep in a hotel."

So with Josh much preferring the convenience of his on-site home and Tony not bothered where he lays his head, do the two riders agree there's a magic number when it comes to the amount of sleep they need the night before a race?

"I can survive on six hours sleep but I need around nine hours really," offers Josh while for Tony it's almost a case of less is more. "I normally sleep for seven or eight hours, that's enough for me," says the former MX2 champ. "If I sleep too much I don't feel so good so seven or eight hours is perfect for me."

Despite hoping to get nine hours of sleep, one thing Josh tries to do is get as much sleep as he can during the week just in case he isn't able to get his head down for as long as he'd like the evening before race day.

Next up after a good night's sleep is the importance of a race day routine. Knowing where you need to be and when, as well as ensuring that everything you need is easily accessible, helps ensure race day runs smoothly.

"I have a basic routine on race day where I come in from practice, do an autograph session, have something to eat and prepare my riding gear," says Josh. "Then I'll go down and watch the start and the first few laps of the first MX2 race, head back to the truck and get changed and then watch the end of the race and prepare my starting position. I know it works for me and I try and do it every GP."

Fundamentally important to good results is what Josh and Tony eat on race day. No real surprise there but while for most club riders that's often whatever's on offer from the fast food stand at the track, when they eat and how much each rider eats is critical in ensuring they perform at their best.

"I prefer to eat with the Rinaldi team or I'll swing by the Martin Honda Racing truck around 11 o'clock to get some pasta on both Saturday and Sunday," explains Josh. "I have a routine of having a big evening meal on Saturday, pasta before qualifying or the first race and then I try and snack throughout the day. I'm always nibbling on a Powerbar, rather than eating too much and then feeling stuffed. I don't have a special diet, I just try and eat what I like as regular light meals."

For Cairoli Sunday isn't that much different to any other day of the week. "I don't change my diet during the weekend – I try to eat like I do during the week."

And just like Josh, Antonio doesn't have a special diet, preferring instead simply to eat sensibly. "I don't have a special diet but I make sure that I don't eat food that is bad for me, like fried food. On race day I normally have some breakfast when I get up and then I will have some pasta with tomato after the first heat. I don't eat too much because it's not good to be too full."

Arguably more important than what they eat on race day is what the Yamaha duo drink and when they drink it. Adequate hydration is key to fending off cramp and drops in concentration levels so both riders spend not just race day but the entire racing season ensuring they are well hydrated.

"It's so important to be well hydrated," explains Josh. "I always try and drink a lot of water on Wednesday and Thursday before a race to hydrate myself as best I can, especially if I know the weather's going to be hot. I always have a drinks bottle with me and I just keep drinking all day Saturday and Sunday when I'm at the track. I don't drink anything too special just something to replace the minerals and vitamins I lose through sweating. I have a recovery drink that I have at the end of the day which really helps me but basically I drink from the moment I wake up to the moment I

go to bed after the race.

Antonio's drinking routine mirrors Josh's almost perfectly. Well aware that drinking adequate amounts of fluids is hugely important, Cairoli is always either hydrating himself ahead of race day or re-hydrating himself after race day.

"I use sports drinks a lot and drink them all through the week," he admits. "Basically, I don't stop drinking them because I will start drinking them maybe two days before the weekend and keep drinking them for a couple of days after the race to make sure I am always hydrated. Drinking during the weekend is similar to eating during the weekend for me – I drink a little bit all the time rather than big amounts."

With their bodies readied for race day thanks to being well rested, well fed and well hydrated, preparing themselves mentally is also a hugely important aspect of Coppins and Cairoli's race day routine. Not having to worry about anything other than the track is key to both riders' mental approach to a GP race day.

"I always think about what I'm going to do in the race, whether the start goes good or bad," explains Josh. "I try and think about the track as well, where I can pass riders – and I try and think through all different scenarios. The main thing is thinking about the start though. I know by then that the bike is ready so I just focus my thoughts on the track."

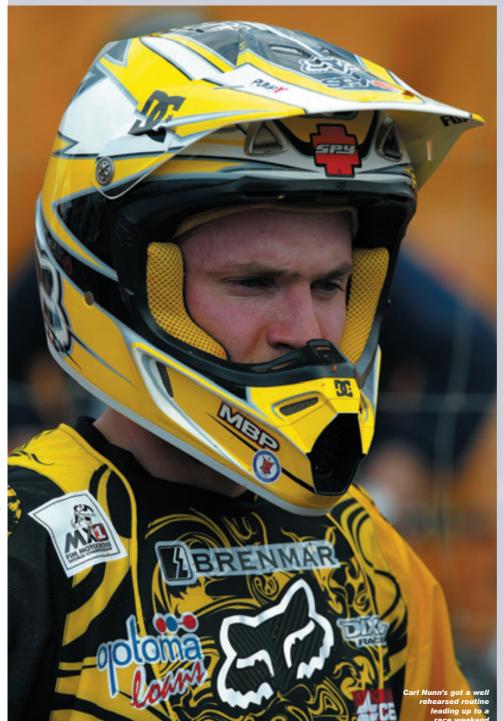
For Cairoli thinking about the track is also what dominates his thoughts. "I spend most of my time on Sunday morning thinking about what I have to do in the race," he confirms. "I think about the start, the places on the track that I can pass other riders, things like that. I also think about what tyres to use and if I want to make any small changes to my bike."

Also important to both riders is talking to their teams. With a problem shared a problem halved, by talking with their team managers, mechanics and team staff both Josh and Antonio reduce stress and increase









NUNNY'S PREP

Sleep

"If I don't get much sleep I'm terrible in the mornings. I need at least eight hours. If I can get more than that it's great but I need eight hours really. I have my camper at the more local races but I'll stay in hotels if the races are a long way from home. The first five or six years of my career were spent in hotels so I'm used to them but I do prefer the home comforts of my camper."

Eat

"I eat slightly differently at the weekends to what I do during the week. I eat a lot of pasta during the weekend which makes me not want to eat it when I'm home. I mix carbohydrates and fruit and eat little and often. I make sure I eat at least one hour before a race. I don't have a lot before the first race and then make sure I eat before the second race. As a kid I'd never eat on race day but I've learned that you have to."

Drink

"I have an energy drink that I use as and when I need it but it's mainly water that I drink. I normally start increasing the amounts of fluids I take on from Friday before a race, sometimes the Thursday depending on how I'm feeling. I'm practising and training during the week so I'm constantly taking on fluids all the time. I normally drink between four to six litres of water."

Think

"I do my own goggles about an hour before I go out which helps me keep my mind off things. I'm always thinking about the track and my bike but I just try and stay relaxed and not get too worked up about anything."

Music

"I listen to a lot of music at home but I always seem to forget my MP3 player which I guess means that I can easily do without it. If I have it with me I stick it on random and listen to a bit of everything while I'm doing my goggles."

Talk

"You have to talk to people so I don't try and hide myself away. I talk to the team when I get to the track and find out what's what. I generally don't go around and visit other riders and teams because there's not much time. I talk to the team about the bike, tyres, gearing, the track. There's always stuff to talk about"

Superstitions

"I do put everything on my left side before putting it on my right side for some reason. I have done it the other way around but it just doesn't feel right. It's more habit than anything else. I don't have any superstitions though."

Sex

"Well, I wouldn't want it 10 minutes before a race but if my girlfriend's with me the night before a race then, yeah, definitely."

well-being simply by communicating.

"I talk a lot with the team and my mechanics before I race, I don't like to be too serious, I like to have fun," explains Cairoli. "As well as talking about the race, the track and my bike I also like to talk about normal things, things that are nothing to do with racing. It helps me stay relaxed."

For Josh talking is equally important and a clear gauge of how nervous he's feeling on race day. "If I'm feeling good before a race I like to talk to people but if I stop talking and close myself off then it means I'm nervous. I'll often go and talk to Jacky Vimond about a few things as well as speaking to my mechanic and the team about all sorts of stuff. The more I talk the better I'm feeling."

With both riders admitting that talking with their teams helps them stay calm, one thing neither rider has time for is superstitions. With Cairoli flat out denying that he's superstitious at all, Josh explains why having to always put your

left boot on before your right or wearing your lucky underpants is a bad thing as a GP racer.

"I'm not really superstitious," explains Josh. "I try and lock that sh*t out because if you worry about it too much it'll fry your brain. Sometimes I have bad dreams about my racing but when I wake up I just tell myself that a dream is a dream and that there's no reason to read into it too much."

While Josh and Antonio have similar eating and drinking patterns on race day, one thing that does differentiate their preparations is music. Cairoli loves it while Josh can take it or leave it.

"I really like listening to music during a race weekend, it helps me to relax," explains Cairoli. "I'm aggressive enough so I don't need music to get me going. I listen to trance music and often listen to it on the start line."

By contrast, although Josh's iPod is never far away if he does use it it's when he returns to his camper and never on the start line. "I always

have my iPod with me but most of the time it's set up in the motorhome. If I do use it it's between races to help me calm down a little, I certainly don't need it to fire me up before a race. I'm not a rider that likes to listen to music on the start line, I'm thinking too much about the race to take any notice of it."

Finally, what about sex the night before a GP? With football players often kept away from their wives and girlfriends before important matches, how do the two Yamaha stars view a little bit of bedroom action ahead of an important race? And do their teams ever dictate what they can and can't do?

"No," says Antonio simply. "I know what I can and can't do before a race, my team manager doesn't have to tell me."

What about Josh? "I reckon sex the night before a race is a good thing. If I was starved before all my races I reckon I'd struggle," explains the New Zealander. "It doesn't do any rider any good to be like a dog on heat."



magazine machine

G2 Ergonomics throttle barrel is a bit of Rush Racing-supplied trickery pokery





events appear to be iust what off-road riders want as all 500 available places - that's 100 youth, 200 sportsman and 200 clubman/expert - were

filled way before the closing date for entries. And even with 500 riders the event ran bang on time with no fuss and no serious injuries - a real credit to JK and the crew.

The 10-minute plus course at Gisburn had a little bit of everything and was just perfect for getting a good feel for your bike in various conditions. Bumpy straights, killer climbs, jumps, rocks, roots and ruts - Gisburn's got them all. If you get chance to race here or the Bolton-by-Bowland venue with Dirtbike-Traxs I recommend that you do.

My 90 minutes of glory at Gisburn were actually pretty far from being glorious. A bad start and a bunch of silly stalls kept me in the mid-pack of the expert class for the first hour before my increasingly sore palms made my pace slacken to the point where there was more blood flowing through my gloves than there was fuel through the carburettor. Not good. But while it's never good to DNF a race I left Gisburn feeling quite positive as I felt I'd learnt plenty about the KXF and know in which direction I want to take the bike

With no time to do much but let my hands grow some new skin my next outing was at a Salop Club run centre meeting at Hawkstone Park. With new super-soft Renthal kevlar grips and Windham-bend Twinwalls fitted I figured I'd have an enjoyable day at the races but I didn't. I rode like a complete lemon instead and left Hawkstone feeling mentally battered.

I know that the KXF is a good bike when set up correctly so I can only assume that my piloting skills are what's lacking at the moment. Aside from relearning how to ride I think the next step has to be getting the suspension working perfectly then finding a good pipe combination to give me the power delivery I crave - I don't need more power, I simply want smoother power. Hopefully my next trip to

Wakker's G-Unit should get things heading in the right direction.

Aside from the grips, bars and a pair of super swank Racetech handquards - available now from www.smartzz.co.uk - I've also been trying out a G2 Ergonomics throttle cam system. The aluminium throttle tube that's available from www.rushracing.co.uk for £69.95 comes with three different cams which ultimately change the way in which the throttle cables are pulled. The first cam - cam 100 has the same profile as the stocker while the other two - cam 050 and cam 200 - offer faster and variable pull actions respectively.

Feeling a bit Billy Bignuts I chose to try the fast acting cam 050 first. This basically allows you to go from nowt to flat out quicker than you would with the stock throttle tube. Out on the track the only real notable difference is that you need less wrist action to go WFO which is great when grip is good. On slick sections the light switch style action isn't so great - on a 450 but that's where cam 200 really comes into its own. While cam 200 doesn't increase the amount of rotation needed to get the carb slide to the flat-out position it does increase the amount of rotation from zero to half open throttle settings. This basically means control is increased and finding grip is easier. It does definitely work in a positive way and cam 200 is here to stay for the time being.

Aside from that the bike currently remains in stock form although there's some good stuff that's ready to be bolted on in the next few weeks. The list at the moment includes Haan wheels, sexy new N-Style graphics, RG3 triple clamps, more Renthal goodness plus I'll also be trying a Rekluse z-Start Pro clutch system in the near future

And it's not just the bike that's due to be

improved and modified. By the time you read this I should have three tiny, fresh scars on my right knee and hopefully a lot of extra movement and less clunkiness and pain. With a rejuvenated joint and a freshly renovated bike there should be no stopping me - wahahaha. So tune in next month to see if both the bike and body operations are a success!



Last year's Women's World Cup winner, Katherine Prumm

Last year's Women's World Cup winner, Katherine Prumm isn't content simply to be the fastest female out there – she wants to put brains before brawn and take on the men as well...

Words and photos by Alex Hodgkinson

TIME WAS when females were at the motocross track just to brighten up the life of a bunch of machomen but the Women's World Cup has changed all that and '06 champ Katherine Prumm is not content just to be best of the girls!

"Of course I know I can't expect ever to beat the best guys. Girls are actually stronger at 12 but men become physically stronger through the teens. One of my team-mates back home is the same age as me and we were always neck and neck but the last few months he's been getting really strong and edging a bit away from me. Maybe women just have to try to ride with their heads a bit more and look for the advantage on the track rather than in strength.







Katherine on..

Lisa Church

"Lisa does a really good job, she has a really professional team and it's nice to be a part of it. The Molson team is much more organised than anything we have in NZ or America and it probably does help to have two females on the team to keep the numbers up and stop the boys bossing us around."

Kawasaki

"At Kawasaki there's a really good relationship with all of their counterparts worldwide. I've been in the Molson team for three years now and they feel like family and wherever I go Kawasaki NZ arrange assistance for me. I pit out of the factory team in Australia and I was in the Team Green programme in America and they sorted me out with bikes, mechanics, whatever I needed. And I just love the bikes."

Yanks

"When I got to the US last year, straight off my win at Teutschenthal, it was my first time in the States. The press had pumped me up but nobody knew what to expect from me, then I went 1-1 and they realised I was for real. But a lot of them didn't like having a foreigner stepping on their turf and I had a few run-ins on the track."



So how have the last 12 months been as champion? "A rather injured year," she smiles. "After I won the title in Sweden I flew home for 10 days and then from there on to Colorado to race the third round of the American women's championship that I was leading. I went 1-2 there for the overall and then the next weekend I went to Washougal.

"Practice felt really good but the first race I came off the gate, collided with another rider and went down on my left knee. It went into a forced flexion and another rider ran it over and snapped my ACL in two, cracked my fibula and the cartilage was damaged too."

But it was another month before she knew! "I got up and finished the weekend third so I still had the overall lead in the series. I went home to recover and the doctors told me the knee was perfect, nothing wrong with it. But after a month I was still having problems so I went for an MRI scan and that's when I found out the extent of the damage. I was booked to see a surgeon but I had managed for a month so they said why not keep on riding so, as you do, I carried on riding in the NZ championship at home.

"I had won the first round of the women's championship but I also race MX2. There was only MX2 at the second round. Saturday was really dry but Sunday the heavens opened. I just came down a straight hanging off the back of the bike and without warning the knee dislocated, just like that. The ACL was just not there to support it. Ten days after that I had surgery.

"Already after five weeks I was running again which was really early and in the middle of January I jumped back on the bike, rode for two weeks and went to the season-opener, had a big crash in practice on a heavily watered up-ramp and compressed T9 in my back so I was out for another five weeks. Not the comeback I was looking for but now I've been riding since March with no worries so I'll just try to keep it on two wheels!"

Enough of the downside – how was the reception when Katherine arrived back home as champion? "When I landed at the airport in Auckland the press and TV news were there waiting for me to come out. All of my team-mates at Kawasaki, Team Green management, the owner of Kawasaki NZ, a bunch of my sponsors, friends that I've grown up with, they were all there too – it was just an amazing feeling and it carried on for the 10 days until I went to the US.

"A lot of people know me in NZ now and, with Josh and Ben doing so well, the whole sport is becoming a lot more popular and getting more publicised in the





news nationally. It's actually cool to ride motocross back home now!"

But what about the women's sport worldwide? "It's definitely getting bigger. Back home in NZ there's tremendous growth. We get about 30 on the start line now and in Australia they had a full gate of 40 for the first time this year. Already back home there are a few kids of 11-12 who are doing so awesome against the boys and when they're 18 or 19 they'll definitely be ready for a shot at the world title. Everyone is getting really involved in the women's racing, it's not just a guy's sport anymore and the level of competition is rising.

'It would be just awesome to have a round in SA. It would be a great chance get to see my family back there. There's only me, my mom and dad and my brother and one of my mom's sisters in NZ - all the rest of the family on both sides is in SA, around Cape Town and Jo'burg.'

Katherine has a definite schedule ahead of her this year - "I won't go to the US, I have enough races with Australia, NZ and the world cup" - but, no matter how many girls races there are, she will not give up her mixed races. "I've grown up racing the boys and I just love getting out there racing with them. They push you and make you learn new stuff and I wouldn't want to be completely separated."

When Lierop was named as the venue for the world cup finale in September there were many a raised eyebrow at the physical torture facing the girls but it doesn't worry Katherine.

"Actually, I'm really excited about the finale being in Lierop this year. We have no sand tracks at all in NZ, both BT and Josh had to learn how to ride it when they got here. Everyone seems to be putting a negative spin on it but to me I can't wait. Bring on the rough track, the rougher the better.

"I do a fair bit of physical training but I think when the track gets rough it's more a matter of going out there and concentrating. You can't just go full nanas, you've got to ride smart and those who are prepared both physically and mentally are going to do well there. I hope I am one of them. I'm looking forward to going out there on a challenging circuit.

"I've been in Belgium for a fortnight, getting some time with the team, sorting out the bike and getting my confidence up and I have been to Lommel for the first time which was good. Josh was in Italy but I've been riding with Gareth and Scotty so that was good.

And, even before she ran out of time to pull back deficits caused by falls in the opening round of the world cup at Teutschenthal, Katherine was insistent that the women's races are too short. "I would like to see them go to two times 30 minutes - 20 minutes is not really that long. We have the same debate back home - in NZ they run 20 but in Australia they run 30. It showed at the opening round there that the girls who do the hard work behind the scenes and the endurance training come into their own in the last 10 minutes. You don't have to become a Russian athlete, it's a matter of physical fitness and endurance.'

Katherine believes an expansion of the FIM series could bring benefits to all. "The ideal would be if Youthstream made it into a real world championship with six or seven rounds. That would be unreal, that would be awesome, a genuine world championship for other young girls to aspire to. And I think a lot of the teams would support it then, a real world championship with enough races.

"I'm lucky to have Kawasaki and Molson supporting me but I'm not making any money out of it so it's not a job, it's still a hobby. But the amount of time it takes up, it is a full-time job. I'd love to be able to make a living out of motocross, it's what I enjoy doing most and with the world series growing like it is I think it may be possible in a few years.

"I started a full-time course at uni in computer graphic design in February but I'm taking a break from that while the world cup's on. I was living on campus and doing 50 hours a week in the classroom so it was a full-time job and I just never got to ride during the week.

"I had to decide whether to do uni or MX and this year I want to defend my title but I'm going to have to see if I can combine studies with maintaining my riding at a reasonable level. Maybe I can't ride the series next year but if they make it a world championship then I will definitely miss my studies. I want to be the first world champion too."

mind game

CROSS PURPOSES!

Regular rollickings are the best way to get the most from your child – right? Wrong!

Words by Neil Drew

THIS IS the third in our series of articles devoted to the little known area of sports performance mind coaching. In this article we will help you to understand a few of the many ways that parents and team managers can screw up the potential of their kids and team riders.

We'd all like to think that every parent on the whole wants only the best for their child. But many kids compete in what can only be termed as an abusive environment and become torn between the love they have for their sport and the ties they share with a parent. How many times have we heard of a parent who is verbally abusive to their child or teenager, sometimes even managing to bring them to tears? How many times have we heard of a parent actually punching, slapping or kicking their offspring? It certainly doesn't need me to point out that this is the wrong way to treat anyone, never mind motivate them.

Firstly, let's examine how what happens to us in our formative years can potentially affect us for the rest of our lives and by a strange quirk of how the mind works actually repeats itself. In our first article back in March we touched on the ways in which our brains learn. Basically, in a simplified statement, I pointed out that as human beings we are really a collection of programmed responses which are developed from our experiences as we go through life.

Now let's take a real life example. This lad was in his late teens and his parents would take

him racing. The father would tell the lad before he went on the track that he had better get a good result 'or else' and the lad would go into the race unable to concentrate without realizing he was thinking only of what his punishment might be this time round. So instead of focusing on his race he would be riding around dreading the moment he'd pass his father who would be standing trackside hurling angry abuse at his son. Inevitably he would get a poor result and often he'd have accidents because he was unable to focus. And as a result of the ever worsening results the punishments would increase — a classic vicious circle.

It quickly became a conditioned response that on the morning of a race as they set out the lad would begin to anticipate the trouble that lay ahead and as the morning progressed towards the first race the tension increased. Inevitably, his results started to deteriorate - as did the father/son friendship - culminating with the son buckling under the pressure. Both the father and the son developed conditioned responses that were very damaging. The irony of the whole thing was that the father had put up with the same sort of abuse when he was young and his son was in turn becoming the same way with his college mates and his girlfriend. So the cycle and conditioned responses were set to continue.

In my last article I talked about how the top riders think and how, when faced with a challenge, they look at how they are going to

achieve success rather than where it could go wrong for them. What you'll find is that angry parents or team managers

– usually responding in this way because of either their own upbringing or some failure they themselves have experienced in life – will virtually always be telling their child or rider what they don't want them to do and taking out their inbuilt anger on them.

The paradox is that when we tell someone what we don't want them to do they usually end up doing it! Let me give you an example. Don't think of a blue tree! So what did you just think of? Chances are it was a blue tree!

It is really easy to see the guys who are going to fail if you wander around the paddock and just listen to the ways in which the rider and his parents or team are communicating. You can very easily tell the ones who are going to go out and do their best and the ones who are so consumed with inner turmoil that failure has happened before they've even thrown a leg over the bike.

One of the other common factors that destroys confidence is when a parent always tells their kid what they want them to do and doesn't ever ask what their kid wants – they



don't share their child's dreams, they dictate them. More often than not this happens when the rider has a parent (or team boss) who was a rider themselves but never made the grade for whatever reason.

So if you are a parent or team boss and recognize yourself from the negative behaviour described, remember yourself what it was like when you were growing up and remember how it felt to be controlled and never listened too. It was frustrating and suffocating wasn't it. Now think about how your rider feels when he or she wants to improve at their own rate or ride other events or just wants to be heard and treated like he or she was important rather than what they could achieve as being important.

It is a sad fact but when six out 10 competitors come to me for help to improve their results we have to start with a clear up of negative thoughts and behaviours before we

can even go near the mind coaching side - and the first place to start is usually with the parent. It's a bit like tackling the symptom rather than the cause. And another sad fact is that the parent will hardly ever admit to being unable to control their outbursts and frustrations - only once has a parent actually asked for guidance on how to bring out the best in their son.

So parents and team managers, if you have identified any of your own behaviour in this article what can you do? You can start with an apology and then you can sit down and discuss what you are going to do as a team and treat your child/rider with respect, like they have their own minds. You can then start to support them and help them in a more constructive way, make them feel respected, give them praise when they deserve it, in fact whenever they do anything right - even if it is only one part of their riding it doesn't matter, just simply get into

the habit of looking for the good in them. Your reward will be that you should get back what you put into the relationship (unless the relationship is too badly damaged to be sorted without outside help) and you will have a competitor who listens and goes out to do their best for themselves and for you.

The most frustrating thing about all of this is that sometimes when an adult has a lot of rubbish from the past - or is even experiencing frustration and pressure from their current situation - they actually can't help how they are responding. They know they are doing it but just can't control it...

If you ever begin to go down this route you can now hopefully keep yourself in check and communicate with your rider, show them some respect and remember that it is possible to destroy confidence easier than it is to grow it.





Red hot racing with a side order of sunny skies are dish of the day at Langrish - muchos scorchios!

Words and photo by Fergus O'Dreyfus

WHAT A scorcher! If you weren't at Langrish for round four of the Maxxis British MX championship then you missed out big style because the series that keeps on getting better delivers yet another belter of epic proportions.

The high speed and big jumps of the Manor Farm circuit really favour the fearless and when you sprinkle on some dust dampening water and add some brain-meltingly-hot summer sun you've got the perfect conditions to create some real life motocross heroes.

Hero of the day for most people has to be Pioneer Yamaha's Brad Anderson who's consistently quick in qualifying and both MX1 motos. The ever improving North Easterner goes 2-2 in the races finishing behind genuine GP contenders Ken De Dycker and Billy Mac who are a little less consistent than Embo's boy.

The battle between Ando and Keeno in the opening gambit is almost as scorching as the hot summer sun. Both riders have to work through the pack Brad's 10th and Ken's seventh out of turn one – then pass MotoXtreme's Marshfield Mafia member George Davis who gets the holeshot and leads lap one on his bone-stock KXF! Once out front the pair scrap it out until Ken finally makes a pass stick and motors on to the flag. MacKenzie finishes third after Gordon Crockard's chain snaps with one lap and one straight to go so James Noble finds himself fourth while veteran Mark Eastwood steers his sweet sounding two-smoker to fifth.

Race two's a completely different kettle of fish as Billy Mac removes his finger and takes an easy win, Ando's again a safe second with Noble third while Keeno places fourth ahead of PAR teamsters Crockard and Neville Bradshaw. MacKenzie takes the overall and with a 27-point lead in the series it's surely gonna take a catastrophe for Billy not to take his first British title come the end of the year. Meanwhile, second is still very much up for grabs with just nine points separating second through to fifth.

Down in the MX2 class the Stars and Stripers pull off the unthinkable by going 1-2 in the opener. Mike Brown makes life easy by grabbing the lead in turn three and disappearing from the pack while Swift Suzuki's Sean Hamblin has to battle through from way outside the top five passing team-mate Elliot Banks-Browne, the Molson boys and Tommy Searle on the way. Moto two sees a reversal of fortunes with Brown stuck in the gate - a victim of his own overly twitchy trigger finger. Mike then has to come from the back of the pack (twice) to finally finish 11th. Meanwhile Hamblin charges through to fourth and third overall - after another less than spectacular start.

It's Gareth Swanepoel who takes the second moto win - and the overall on his Molson Kawasaki while Tommy Searle holds on to the series lead after backing up his first moto third with second in race two. And with only eight points separating the young Brit and the South African it's game on!

Series standings

IVIZ		
1	Billy MacKenzie (Motorex Kawasaki)	214 point
2	Ken De Dycker (CAS Honda)	187
3	James Noble (Multitek Honda)	182
4	Brad Anderson (Pioneer Yamaha)	180
5	Gordon Crockard (PAR Honda)	178
6	Mark Eastwood (Wiseco Honda)	126
7	Jordan Rose (Albion KTM)	90
8	Glen Phillips (Kawasaki)	87
9	Danny Smyth (Wiseco Honda)	83
10	Mark Hucklebridge (MotoXtreme Kawasaki)	73

8434	•	
MX	2	
1	Tommy Searle (Red Bull KTM)	200 points
. 2	Gareth Swanepoel (Molson Kawasaki)	192
3	Mike Brown (CAS Honda)	176
4	Shaun Simpson (Wulfsport Kawasaki)	167
. 5	Sean Hamblin (Swift Suzuki)	159
. 6	Tom Church (Molson Kawasaki)	155
7	Martin Barr (Bike It/Dixon Yamaha)	124
8	Jason Dougan (Fork Rent Suzuki)	106
~ 9	Ray Rowson (Molson Kawasaki)	97
- 10	Lewis Gregory (Relentless Suzuki)	94



For more British championship images and news log on to w.dirtbikerider.com





BEAST IN THE FAST!

Mac monsters 'em in Japan but Coppins and Cairoli keep in control of the MXI and MX2 title chases

Words by Alex Hodgkinson Photo by rayarcher.com

WHO WINS in Japan? Who else? And is it expected? Well, let's just say they have the tape ready for the podium and instead of God Save The Queen the sound of bagpipes ring around Sugo!

Yup, Billy Mac - the Crown Prince of Japan after winning MX2 for the last two years - is now the Emperor after slaying the world in MX1 too! And it isn't even close. King Billy is out of sight within three 1.48 laps on a day when no-one else can dip below 1.51 and the second moto is going the same way until the Scot hits the face of the triple into the whoops and is pitched over the bars 10ft up in the air! But he gets back on to haul in Mike Brown at a second a lap and 1-2 moto scores easily clinch the overall as Brownie makes it a 1-2 overall for the British contingent around what Mike describes as the "most technical track I ever rode".

And Billy's win isn't the end of UK GP delight this month... Tommy Gun rattles up podiums in Italy and Japan to run fourth in the series, Swanny is back in the top six, Noble runs top 10 every week and the Crock Star is the fastest man on the track at the end of the day in Germany. Add in double figure scores for Nunny, TC, Sean Hamblin, Shaun Simpson, Doogie and Keeno, desperately near misses for Martin Barr and Brad Anderson, first-time points for Jake Nicholls and Elliot Banks-Browne and you have GP joy all round for Britain.

Up front Josh Coppins keeps hitting the podium every week to lead MX1 by 63 with only the Suzukis within 120 while Tony C loses an MX2 GP for the first time this year when Chris Pourcel nips past Tommy Searle on the final lap in Japan.

Tony and Chris are still seconds ahead of the rest at the start of the month but both get a wake-up call in Japan as Styla hauls in the Frenchman for the lead in moto one before the champ regroups in the final laps and Tommy is also on the case. "I got my lap times to within one second of them in the first race and I stayed on their pace for the first quarter of race two.

Series standings

٠,٠	1	Josh Coppins (Yamaha Rinaldi)	274 point
ď.	2	Kevin Strijbos (Suzuki Geboers)	211
è	3	Steve Ramon (Suzuki Geboers)	186
	4	Sebastien Pourcel (GPKR Kawasaki)	154
Š	5	David Philippaerts (Red Bull KTM)	148
Ś	6	Ken De Dycker (CAS Honda)	146
Ÿ	7	Jonathan Barragan (Red Bull KTM)	143
۸.	8	Mike Brown (CAS Honda)	141
Ñ	9	James Noble (Multitek Honda)	128
1	10	Tanel Leok (Motorex Kawasaki)	126
1	11	Billy MacKenzie (Motorex Kawasaki)	120
Š	16	Gordon Crockard (PAR Homes Honda)	70
Ş	29	Brad Anderson (Pioneer Yamaha)	11
1		,	

MX2	?	
1	Antonio Cairoli (De Carli Yamaha)	292 points
2	Christophe Pourcel (GPKR Kawasaki)	228
3	Tyla Rattray (Red Bull KTM)	218
4	Tommy Searle (Red Bull KTM)	175
5	Pascal Leuret (NGS Honda)	173
6	Gareth Swanepoel (Molson Kawasaki)	147
7	Kenneth Gundersen (Ricci Yamaha)	139
8	Nicolas Aubin (Ricci Yamaha)	134
9	Matti Seistola (SRS Honda)	115
10	Anthony Boissiere (CLS Kawasaki)	95
12	Carl Nunn (Bike It Dixon Yamaha)	69
13	Tom Church (Molson Kawasaki)	65
18	Sean Hamblin (Swift Suzuki)	54
19	Shaun Simpson (Wulfsport Kawasaki)	53
26	Martin Barr (Bike It Dixon Yamaha)	29
27	Jason Dougan (Fork Rent Suzuki)	27
36	Jake Nicholls (Fork Rent Suzuki)	2
39	Elliot Banks-Browne (Swift Suzuki)	1





THE BOU SHOW!

Toni makes it three from three to pull further clear at the top of the trials title table

Words by g2f.co.uk Photo by Eric Kitchen

WITH HIS most emphatic win of the season to date, Toni Bou maintains his 100 per cent record in the 2007 WTC. The young Spanish sensation is simply unstoppable among the slippery French boulders and takes his third GP victory of the year by a massive

Defending champ Adam Raga is Bou's nearest challenger at the purpose-developed trials park that sits 100km north of Nice. An inspired second lap by Raga makes him worthy of his runners up spot and keeps Britain's Dougie Lampkin down in third place. Given the tough conditions Lampkin is happy to return to the podium having narrowly missed out twice at the previous round. Takahisa Fujinami and an off-form Albert Cabestany round out the top five.

SSDT winner James Dabill finishes down in a slightly disappointing seventh position, losing out on sixth place to Jeroni Fajardo by a single mark after a last section disaster. Showing his growing potential, Dabill leads the trial early on and finishes the first lap within touching distance of a podium result before it all goes wrong in the closing stages.

Britain's Michael Brown moves 11 points clear in the Junior standings with a convincing win over the much fancied home runner Nicolas Gontard while Alexz Wigg drops to third in the series as the Youth champion finds the French course too much for his 125cc machine. But Lee Sampson makes it two Brits on the rostrum with a battling third spot as the Ace Trials Team finally gets some reward for the privately-funded squad.

Through in the Youth category a third place for Ross Danby keeps his title hopes alive as Alfredo Gomez matches Bou's run of four wins from four starts.

Series standings

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W7	c	
1	Toni Bou (Montesa)	80 points
2	Adam Raga (Gas Gas)	66
3	Takahisa Fujinami (Montesa)	58
4	Dougie Lampkin (Montesa)	56
5	Albert Cabestany (Sherco)	42
7	James Dabill (Montesa)	37
13	Shaun Morris (Gas Gas)	13
Jui	nior	
1	Michael Brown (Beta)	75 points
2	Nicolas Gontard (Gas Gas)	64
3	Alexz Wigg (Gas Gas)	58
4	Loris Gubian (Sherco)	54
5	Lee Sampson (Sherco)	47
7	Sam Haslamm (Scorpa)	23
v ()		
You		
1	Alfredo Gomez (Gas Gas)	80 points
- 2	Ross Danby (Gas Gas)	64
. 3	Alexis Cervantesm (Sherco)	60
4	David Millanm (Sherco)	39
5	Patrick Smage (Sherco)	30
771		

Robert Andrewsm (Gas Gas)





FINNISH POLISH!

As the WEC hits the halfway mark Juha Salminen is dominating El with 200 perfect points...

Words & photo by Jonty Edmunds

WITH FOUR rounds of the '07 World Enduro Championship gone and four rounds still remaining one rider sits comfortably and confidently at the top of his class – Finn Juha Salminen. No matter if the sun shines, the ground's frozen, the special tests are littered with rocks or the event's easy or demanding, Juha's got his rivals beat no matter what the championship throws at him.

Following wins at the opening round in Sweden the championship-hungry Finn then claims two further double E1 class wins at the GP of Spain and the GP of Portugal before reaching the halfway point of the series with his 100 per cent win record unspoiled.

"There hasn't been one rider that has consistently pushed me this season which is good for my championship," comments Juha after the GP of Italy. "I'm now 60 points ahead and, yeah, things are going well."

With the six-time world champion having to work hard to win the first day in Italy before comfortably topping the podium on day two, Frenchman Marc Germain claims his best finish of the season in second on day one while it's home rider Simone Albergoni who gets closest to Juha on day two.

In the E2 class the championship standings get a major shake up in Italy as Frenchman Johnny Aubert crashes heavily on day one to finish third before a bike problem puts him out of day two. Taking over at the top of the series thanks to a double class win in Italy, Honda's Mika Ahola opens up a 16-point lead as the series heads to the States and Canada with reigning class champion Samuli Aro in second.

"I didn't think I was fast enough to win in Italy but I just went for it and things worked well for me," admits Mika. "I can't remember the last time I claimed a double class win."

In the E3 class KTM team-mates Marko Tarkkala and Ivan Cervantes claim a day win each resulting in things staying extremely close at the top of the E3 championship standings. For Christophe Nambotin, the man of the moment in the Enduro Junior class, a DNF on day two gives defending class champion Joakim Ljunggren an unexpected championship bonus as he extends his lead to 40 points.

Series standings

E1 1 2 3 28 33 34	,	200 points 140 139 12 8 4
E2 1 2 3	Mika Ahola (Honda) Samuli Aro (KTM) Johnny Aubert (Yamaha)	183 points 167 152
E3 1 2 3 15	Ivan Cervantes (KTM) Marko Tarkkala (KTM) Bjorne Carlsson (Husaberg) Gordon Clarke (TM)	185 points 183 148 41
EJ 1 2 3 8 9 13 20	Joakim Ljunggren (Husaberg) Christophe Nambotin (Gas Gas) Tom Sagar (KTM) Daryl Bolter (Husqvarna) Jake Stapleton (TM) Si Wakely (Husqvarna) Greg Evans (KTM)	179 points 138 116 72 62 41 33





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KANESUGAR!

15-YEAR-OLD NORTHERN IRISH LASS NATALIE KANE IS ONE OF BRITAIN'S BRIGHTEST HOPES IN THIS YEAR'S FIM WOMEN'S MOTOCROSS WORLD CUP

Words and photos by still-mx.co.ul



Ith the FIM Women's World Cup already under way, Rage set out to track down our leading contender who unfortunately had to miss round one due to a shoulder injury. Natalie Kane's fired up for round two though and will represent her country alongside the big guns of the women's motocross scene such as Katherine Prumm and Livia Lancelot.

Natalie has a long future in motocross ahead of her but her history so far is more than impressive. Not one to shy away from racing with the best in the women's motocross world she also mixes it up weekend-in, weekend-out with all-comers in the BYMX, Irish championship and Girls British championships as well as making the team for the Youth des Nations once again.

Page after page could be filled up with Natalie's achievements so far, not only in the UK and Ireland but also in the USA. Here is a brief run down on some of the highlights of her 11 years of riding – first girl to win an Ulster championship, first girl to win an Irish championship, first girl to represent her country (Ireland) and first girl to win a race at Mini Trophy des Nations.

Rage caught up with Natalie to find out more about the past, the present and what the future holds for her in the sport we all love motocross.

Rage: At the age of four what made you want to get on a motorcycle?

NK: "Well I had a quad but my cousin Sean Devlin had a PW50 and let me have a go. Within two laps I could ride it by myself and I loved it so my mum and dad got me PW for Christmas and I have been riding ever since."

Rage: Did you ever think that you would be entering motocross events on the world stage and if so at what age did you decide that it was going to be a goal of yours to do so?

NK: "Yeah from when I was six years old I knew riding a motocross bike is what I wanted to do. I wanted to be a GP rider as that is the highest level you can achieve."

Rage: What is the motocross scene like over in Ireland – are there plenty of practice tracks for you to use?

NK: "The racing part in Ireland is pretty good with all the boys but for practising it's not so hot. I can only practice on two tracks due to the lack of facilities. A sand one and my own little track which is hard pack."

Rage: Over the years you must have ridden most of the tracks available in the UK and a fair few in the USA and other countries. In an ideal world what track would you choose to have in your back garden?

NK: "I've been to quite a few in the UK and also the USA but I'd have to say that Cycle Ranch in the USA would be nice to have to go on when you wanted but I would not mind Brampton or Desertmartin either." Rage: You race alongside both male and female riders and you're not one to let the boys bully you on the track. Do you find that some boys don't like the fact you are getting better results than they are?

NK: "Haha definitely! When it comes to events like the BYMX I have to race everyone on the track whether it's boys or girls. Some boys do think they can bully me but if you're giving it out you have to able to take it. Boys I've raced with since I was six have a lot of respect for me!"

Rage: It's only in the last few months that you moved up onto the 250F from the big-wheels – was this was in preparation for the Women's World Cup?

NK: "Yeah I had another year in the big-wheels and was going to stay down but I got offered sponsorship to do the Women's World Cup and all my usual championships from Sonat Racing (that's Sophia Paull and myself) so I had to move up or miss the opportunity."

Rage: How are you finding the larger bike?

NK: "I have a lot more room to move on the
250F because my legs were getting too long for
the small bike but I just need to get my strength
built up so I can throw it around like I could
with my 85. It's hard at the minute because of
my shoulder."

Rage: You went to Germany anyway to go and check out the competition – it must have been a bitter pill to swallow sitting there watching and



not competing. If you'd been fully fit how do you think you would have got on after watching the races?

NK: "It was very hard for me just to sit watching and not competing in the first round and being out of the championship race already. Personally for me I think I could have been in the top five but there are some pretty fast girls out there."

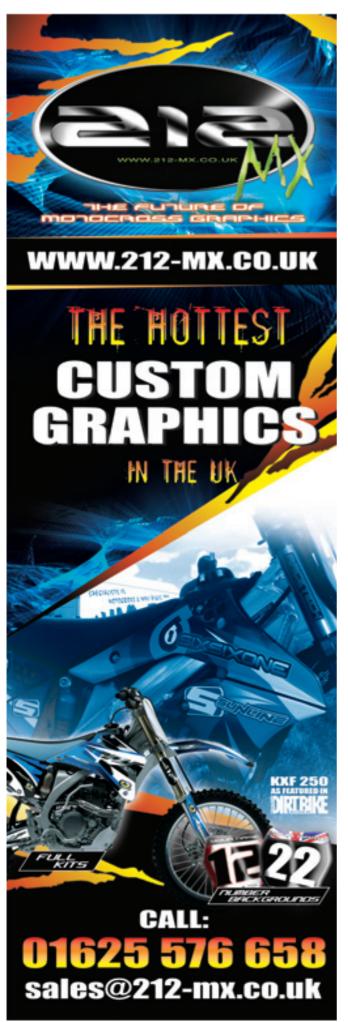
se: So the shoulder is on the mend after the dislocation and everything being well you'll be on the start line at Uddevalla - bet you can't wait?

NK: "I will be itching to get out there and with a lot of hard work hopefully my shoulder will be strong enough to last the whole 20 minutes blus 2 lap motos in Uddevalla."

Good luck with the rest of the season Natalie. Before you sign off is there anyone you'd like to thank?

NK: Thanks. I'd like to thank the following people for all of their support. All my family and friends especially my sister Ashlee and my mum and dad. For the help they give me I'd like to thank Holeshot Moto-X NI, Sonat Racing. DC Racing, Gavin Ross for helping get my shoulder ready for Sweden, Michael Campbell and Spence Racing. Thanks also to Henryk Cameron and his family for the help they give me when I'm in England (plus others, you know who you are!) and also my fellow competitors for the good battles.







MAX!

BREAKDOWNS, RACE WINS AND EXAMS -IT'S BEEN A BUSY OLD MONTH FOR MAX!

The track for the first round of the European championship was awesome with some really cool sections. I was having a lot of fun and setting some fast times eventually ending up second in timed training behind Jason Clermont.

In my first race I got an okay start and quickly worked my way through the pack and closed down Jeffrey Herlings who was leading. I sat behind him for a bit then slipped by him on one of the hardest corners. I then put in some super quick laps and edged away to take the win – a great way to start the Euro champs.

My second moto was going well and I was working my way through and just about to pass for the lead when I got a flat rear. I came in and got it changed as fast as possible before going back out in 30th and started to pull back through. I eventually ended up 16th and got fifth overall. It was great because I had all the team there. Gary was helper and I also had my mechanic Lionel Viaene. It was like I was a pro!

The next weekend was the second round in Bulgaria. Throughout the week we trained at Samokov where I have another Euro round later in the year. It was awesome. The conditions were perfect – it rained just the right amount so it was super tacky.

Then on Friday morning we all travelled the four hours to Sevlievo where I had my next race. I was ready to do some business. Most people say that this track is the best in the world and to be honest I have to agree with them! It has massive up and downhills with huge tabletops, step-ups and even has two whoop sections.

I had a good timed training, qualifying second behind Jason Clermont. Unfortunately in free training on Sunday morning I blew my bike up. We had changed the jetting and I seized it. I had to ride my second bike which isn't as good as my first bike and with the amount of tough competition around I thought it was all going wrong!

In my first moto I got a great start and about five laps in I made some moves to get into second. The leader Jason Clermont on the 150cc four-stroke had about an eight-second lead but I worked as hard as I could and eventually on the last lap with some help from the back markers I caught him but couldn't pass him.

In my second moto I got a better start and was sat in third. Clermont was just in front of me and Herlings was in the lead. Jeffrey crashed so Clermont and I were out in front. I sat behind him for the whole race thinking about where to pass and then on the last turn of the last lap I slipped under him and took the lead. It was such a close finish I didn't even know I had won — 0.262 of a second was the gap! Having such a great ride I was back in second in the points standings. With three sand races in a row coming up I think I have a good chance of getting some points back.

Dad and I flew home and I had my SATS exams the very next day. It was okay though because my teachers gave me all my work ages in advance and I email them to make sure I'm ready for them. After my exams I got a 125cc to practice and have some fun on. Overall I have had a

brilliant month – let's hope the next one goes the same!

sportsround-up!

THE 2007 SCHOOLIE SEASON KEEPS ON KEEPING ON...

nother great weekend of racing at the latest round of the BYMX series at Brampton saw championship leaders Ben Watson, Matthew Fleming, Sam Davis, Lewis Tombs and Alex Rockwell all edge further clear of the competition.

Bad weather has put a temporary hold on the BSMA series and severely dampened the Dean Moor round of the British Masters. The racing meanwhile was red hot with Rob Muscat taking a maximum in the SW85s while Christian Taylor, Richie Worrall and Luke Hawkins traded wins in the big wheels and Mel Pocock dominated the 125 division.

The second round of the Maxxis BYMX2 series for 125 and 250 four-stroke racers was held at Langrish. Graeme Irwin rocketed to a pair of wins to take the overall ahead of local lad Ross Hill who finished second in both motos. Alex Rockwell holds down the series lead by nine points with just two rounds to go.



BYMX series standings

65cc

1 Ben Watson 500 points, 2 Callan Cooper 470, 3 Jack Heath 469, 4 Matthew Callaghan 432, 5 Michael Eccles 406, 6 Corrie Southwood 404

SW85cc

1 Matthew Fleming 510 points, 2 Rob Muscat 465, 3 Scott Alldridge 461, 4 Dan Thornhill 406, 5 Andrew Reid 382, 6 Bradley Pocock 363

BW85cc

1 Sam Davis 511 points, 2 Josh Spinks 454, 3 Richie Worrall 449, 4 Connor Walkley 431, 5 James Hutchinson 421, 6 Daniel McCanney 407

Intermediate 125cc

1 Lewis Tombs 498 points, 2 David Games 467, 3 Nathan Rooks 437, 4 Will Worden 404, 5 Bradley Smith 401, 6 Scot James 372

Premier 125cc

1 Alex Rockwell 516 points, 2 Lewis King 445, 3 Matthew Moffat 397, 4 Josh Waterman 394, 5 Aaron Smith 390, 6 Mel Pocock 384

Maxxis BYMX2 series standings

1 Alex Rockwell 99 points, 2 Graeme Irwin 90, 3 Ross Hill 79, 4 Josh Waterman 72, 5 Lewis King 71, 6 Luke Burton 59



LADDVSNIADDE

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Seven-year-old Daniel Dey from sunny Scotland is our latest winner of a Rob Herring/Ride MX training day voucher thanks to this cool shot of him crossing it up for David Dickson's camera.

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had a little ticket to order your brekkie and when it

toast, salad and fish. Not what I call a race diet

came you wished you'd stayed in bed - one slice of

breakfast. So I decided to go looking for something else round the city. It was 5.30am and I came across

a 7/11 store, kinda like your local Spar! They had these weird triangle rice things with different flavours

in the middle. I bought one which looked like some

kind of pepperoni or meat inside but to my disgust

was raw fish! I was the only one in the street which

was lucky as I was holding on to a tree with slavers

coming oot ma mooth boaking at this rotten triangle

I'm afraid I'm going to end the column on a downer this month. I'm not really a guy of many words with situations like this one but Jan passed away this morning. He was unwell before Japan and was hospitalized for a couple of weeks. I wasn't sure exactly what was going on as I was told they didn't know the problem but I had the honour of talking to him after I won - I could tell in his voice that there was something seriously wrong but I knew

shock to the motocross community. It still doesn't feel real and the paddock won't be the same

above the crowds. God bless to Ellen and the family and my thoughts are with you.

that hearing the news made him smile. I'm not sure what else to say other than it is a big without spotting Jan's head



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